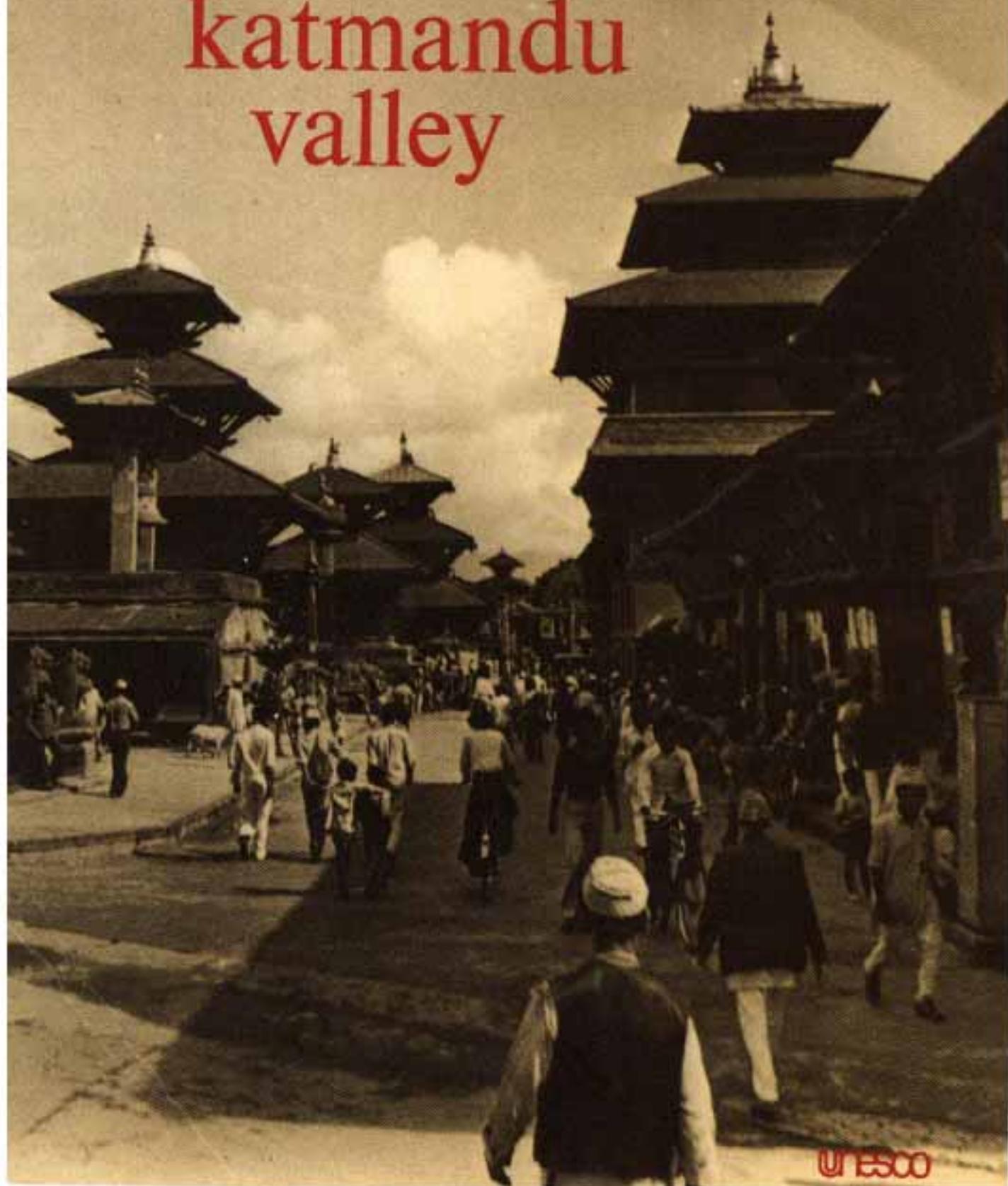


monuments of the katmandu valley

john sanday



UNESCO



Fig. 1b.

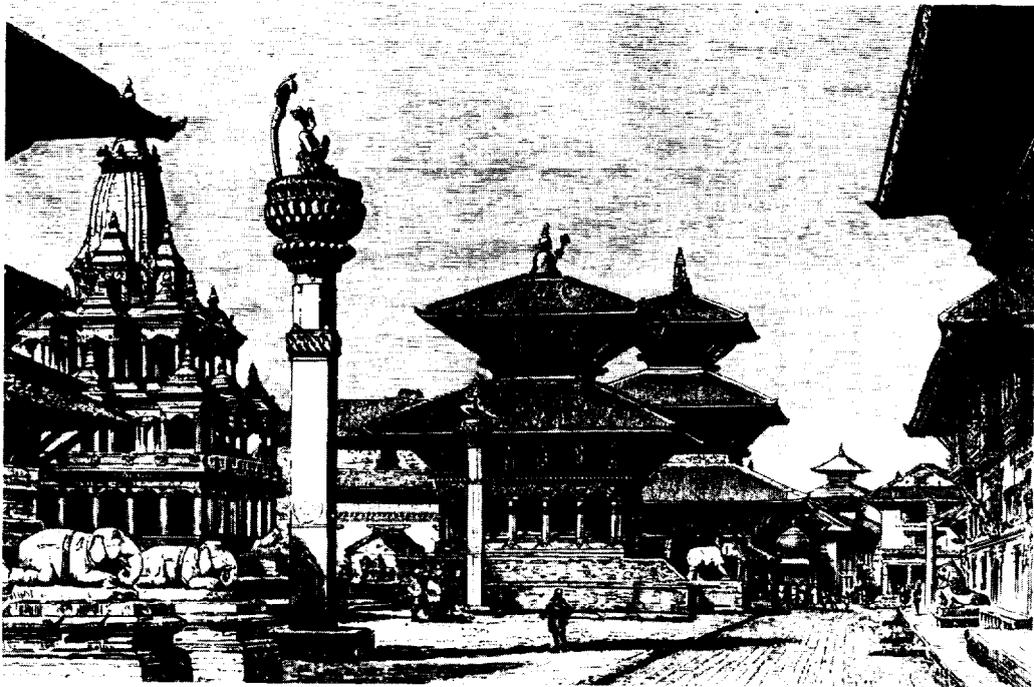


Fig. 19a.

Corrigendum

The lithographs shown in Figure 1b (page 19) and Figure 19a (page 104) have been inadvertently transposed (see overleaf).

John Sanday. *Monuments of the Katmandu Valley*, Paris. Unesco, 1979.

Monuments
of the Katmandu
Valley

Monuments of the Katmandu Valley

John Sanday

unesco

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Preface

Nepal has undergone many changes since the restoration of the monarchy to power and the opening of the country to the outside world. The changes have been most conspicuous in the Valley of Katmandu where there is the densest concentration of the population in the country. Within the valley, over the course of centuries, various dynasties established their capitals and as a result palatial structures, temples, monasteries and the homes of the wealthy were built which offer a concentration of different architectural styles. The long period of isolation which preceded the restoration of the monarchy to power had ensured the continued survival of many cultural elements which no longer exist in other parts of Asia which had been more exposed to the vicissitudes of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As a result the visitor today can have glimpses of ways of life which had once prevailed over much of the southern part of the continent.

However, it is difficult for the uninitiated to fully appreciate the cultural heritage of Nepal in the valley due to the lack of readily accessible descriptions and historical background of the different architectural styles and the intimate relationship of the religious calendar to the patterns of living still found today. This publication, written by Mr John Sanday, who had been a Unesco/UNDP expert in Katmandu for over five years supervising the restoration of one of the most important monuments in the valley, will help to make up for this lack. The author is responsible for the choice and the presentation of the facts contained in this book and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of Unesco and do not commit the Organization.

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Foreword

by His Excellency
Trailokya Nath Upraity.
Nepalese Ambassador
Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary to France,
Permanent Delegate to
Unesco

The Valley of Katmandu is located almost in the centre of Nepal and its broad fertile acres have supported the largest concentration of the country's population. Inevitably, it has been the place where different dynasties located their capitals.

Most of the Newari people, who are among the oldest identified people in the country, are also found in the valley. Today, the Newari are small shopkeepers, businessmen, farmers and craftsmen, and it is to the latter that we owe much of the distinctive character of the different architectural styles and motifs found among the sites and monuments of the valley.

Because of its geographical location, and political and economic roles, the valley has been subjected in the course of its history to a number of invasions, each of which resulted in the introduction of religious and cultural traditions which affected the architectural heritage of the people.

Hindu and Buddhist religions and secular architectural traditions were brought into the valley and, in the course of time, a blend of these two traditions developed, as had also happened in northern India. However, in India the introduction of Islam and the iconoclastic policies of the Muslims led to the destruction of this syncretic style which continues in Nepal. A third source of stimulation came from Tibet in the shape of Tantric Buddhism which has contributed to the decorative aspect of many of our shrines and buildings. The introduction of European-style buildings resulted at first in a discordant note. In some cases, particularly in the poorer sections of the city, cheap imitations of such buildings have affected the appearance of many of our historic quarters. Nevertheless, some of the best contemporary buildings in Katmandu now include traditional

Nepalese architectural features and it is evident that the Newari craftsmen are once again contributing to the continuity of our architectural traditions.

The distinctive character of the old central areas of Katmandu, Patan, Bhadgaon, Kirtipur and other towns attracts many visitors today. Situated slightly away from such centres are courtyards of quiet beauty, rarely visited and at times dilapidated, where outstanding examples of old monasteries or former homes of the aristocracy and the wealthy are found. This guide-book will help to make up for the lack of documentation, introduce the visitor to these areas, and help to awaken renewed interest in our architectural past.

The author, Mr John Sanday, is a young British architect who first went to Nepal to carry out a survey of the ancient royal palace, Hanuman Dhoka. On the basis of his study, work on reconstruction was planned by His Majesty's Government of Nepal—a task aided by contributions from Japan, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Guide Foundation of New York and Unesco—and carried out under Mr Sanday's supervision as a Unesco/United Nations Development Programme expert for over five years. By his efforts to achieve authenticity in the work of restoring Hanuman Dhoka he also contributed to the renaissance of many craft skills among the Newari.

With the co-operation of Unesco and the United Nations Development Programme, we are now carrying out an international campaign for the conservation of the cultural and natural heritage of the Katmandu Valley. At the opening of an exhibition on the art and architecture of Nepal, held during the twentieth session of the General Conference of Unesco in Paris in November 1978, the Minister of Education, the Honourable Pashupati Shumshere J. B. Rana, stated that :

... given a powerful spiritual force by the synthesis between Hinduism and Buddhism—the art and architecture of Nepal retained all through its own idiosyncratic scripture. its own authentic style . . . As a result Nepalese art and architecture preserve a great deal of superb quality and make a contribution to the art of Asia out of all proportion to the small area of the Valley of Katmandu. Yet it is not in these artefacts alone that Nepalese culture resides. . It is vividly alive, not only in the pagodas and stupas, or the idols and murals, but in the festivals and the practice of religion . . . This is not a monument to dead culture . . it flows in the hearts and the minds of our people.

On the same occasion, Mr Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General of Unesco, added :

I wish to take this opportunity to launch a new appeal to governments and ask them to give their generous support to Nepal by providing the equipment, services of experts and funds it needs to carry out the task it has set itself. This is not so much a programme of restoration-in the technical and limited sense of the word-as a dynamic undertaking to safeguard a heritage which is still living and real for the people who created it. I should also like to suggest that there be greater variety in the forms of co-operation and I call on [institutions and people]. . . everywhere to contribute directly and individually according to their particular abilities, and of course within the limits of their means, to illustrate and reinforce the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind in the service of a cause which is close to all our hearts.

This publication is one of a series designed to publicize the International Campaign to Preserve the Cultural and Natural Heritage of Katmandu Valley which is being carried out by Unesco in co-operation with the Nepalese Government. I wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Director-General of Unesco and to the members of the Secretariat who have contributed to our programme to safeguard this heritage.

Introduction

On one of the many journeys I made beyond the Katmandu Valley into the hills, I remember vividly encountering a wizened old Sherpa lady striding along the trail towards me with a great sense of purpose but miles from anywhere. We greeted one another and following normal custom in the hills engaged in a lengthy exchange of questions. I asked her where she was going and she replied 'Nepal'. Thinking she had-misunderstood my faltering Nepali, I asked her again, 'Where are you going?' Again she replied 'Nepal' and explained to me that it would take three days to reach. It was only then that I realized that she was, in fact, referring to the Katmandu Valley, which to her and to many people of her generation is the Kingdom of Nepal.

From very early days, traders, explorers and travellers have struggled through the lowlands and up the old Raj path on foot and horseback, or over one of the numerous high passes between Nepal and Tibet to reach the fulcrum of Nepal-the Katmandu Valley, which represented, and still represents, the hub of activity of the country from where the prevailing influences of religion, politics and architecture have come.

Because of its inaccessibility until recently and, even today, the difficulty of communication and travel within the country, the remoteness and unspoilt character of Nepal enhance the magical qualities that draw the traveller to this unique Himalayan stronghold.

Like the old Sherpa lady, many of you will have to accept, as your stay will be limited, that the Katmandu Valley is Nepal. However, it is hoped that with the assistance of this book, you will be able to witness and feel more deeply the true atmosphere and character of this unique kingdom.

The book has been simply composed and after a cursory study of the history, ecology and physical characteristics of the valley and brief descriptions of its architecture, a series of tours is set out with details of the buildings, the crafts and the traditions to be found in each area.

As the purpose of this book is to raise funds to finance the conservation of the important cultural heritage of the Katmandu Valley, special attention has been placed on the restoration programmes that have already been initiated by the Nepalese Government, together with assistance from Unesco and bilateral agreements with individual countries such as the Federal Republic of Germany.

These temples that you have travelled thousands of miles to see are slowly disintegrating as a result of the effects of time and weather conditions. There is the local knowledge now backed with the training resulting from Unesco's activities to salvage the Hanuman Dhoka; what is lacking are the funds needed to establish a long-term restoration programme which could soon produce its own revenue from the sites that will initially undergo restoration. Should you wish to contribute a further donation to this worthy undertaking, it can be sent to the Fund for the Conservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Katmandu Valley at: Unesco, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris (France).

Physical environment of the Katmandu Valley

The Valley of Katmandu, drained by the holy Bagmati River, is almost as broad as it is wide, covering an area of 570 square kilometres, which is roughly equivalent to the size of a single large city such as London.

The valley forms part of the Nepalese midlands which lie between the Mahabharat Lekh to the south, and the Great Himalayan range to the north, at a longitude and a latitude of 85°50'E. and 27°50'N.

The alluvial floor of the valley is at an altitude of between 1,200 and 1,500 metres above sea level and is subdivided by various watercourses, low ridges and hillocks. The mean temperature varies between 7° and 24°C. The location of the valley in a subtropical zone with good irrigation makes it most suitable for the cultivation of rice-the staple diet of the Nepalese.

Natural phenomena are visible at every turn in the Katmandu Valley. Even in the heart of the capital it is possible to have a glimpse of the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas and the surrounding foothills which encircle the valley. Rivers and their tributaries interlace the landscape and are a prominent feature of the towns and villages. The products of nature are everywhere to be seen, since agriculture plays such an important role in the lives of most of the valley's inhabitants. The changing seasons are dominated by the intense greens or yellows of cereal crops, the towns and villages are alive with the colours of farm produce, the heaps of drying rice and wheat or the vivid reds of chilli peppers laid out on mats in the sun to dry.

The surrounding foothills bordering the valley were once heavily forested, but the density of these forests is sadly depleted on the lower reaches as the terracing for both rice and maize

slowly edges its way up the sides of the valley. Within the valley, the agricultural landscape is dramatically sculptured and contoured, every available square metre of land being irrigated to boost the rice crops of the local farmers. Throughout the countryside vivid splashes of colour from the poinsettias, the marigolds and a host of other flowers and shrubs that are growing wild or are cultivated for votive offerings, add to the intensity of colour so remarkable in the valley. The agricultural scene is not complete without the herds of goats, buffaloes and the ever-present sacred cow. The goats rush around scavenging purposefully, usually with a small child in hot pursuit trying to call the herd to order, while the buffaloes wallow in muddy pools or confront an unsuspecting visitor from their stable beneath the farmhouse or round a sharp bend in the roadway. The cows are blissfully aware of their immunity as they stroll, oblivious to the bustle of activity through the main streets and markets, always with a wary eye open for the chance to purloin an unguarded cabbage.

Into this setting one adds the most colourful element—the people of Nepal; not just the valley. As has already been mentioned, Katmandu Valley attracts people from all over Nepal and it is quite likely that a fair representation of the twenty-six or more different tribes to be found in the country can be encountered bartering in the bazaar. The women are gaily dressed wearing brightly coloured saris, sparkling necklaces and brilliant flowers in their hair. The men are more restrained in their attire. They usually wear baggy trousers or a lungi and a cross-over shirt. Their hat, the Nepalese cap or top, is generally their only concession to colour.

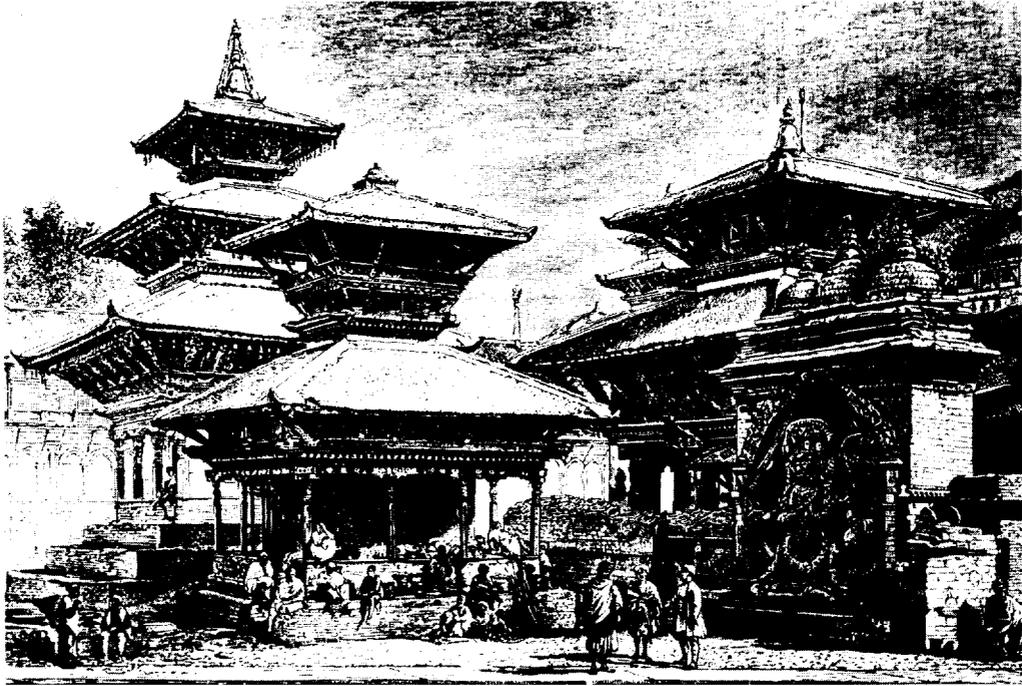
In the streets of the towns there is a constant bustle of activity, especially in the bazaars and the vegetable markets. People are selling, buying, exchanging, bartering or just chatting; added to this there is the cacophony of the rickshaws and the intrusion of the motor vehicle, whose propulsion is apparently activated by the excessive use of the klaxon! The variety of ethnic groups to be encountered in Katmandu is startling, especially just before one of the major festivals. They can range from the Bhote tribes on the Nepalese-Tibetan border, the Sherpas, the Gurungs, Tamangs from the middle hills, to the Rajputs, the Majhis and the Tharus of the lowlands—not forgetting the Brahmins, Chetris and the Newari that inhabit the valley itself.

Because of the restrictive nature of the dwellings, a vast amount of human activity takes place in the open spaces, the squares, the temple forecourts and even along the streets. Grain

is threshed and winnowed, clothes and children are washed and women and babies are oiled and preened in the sunshine. All these activities take place with almost total disregard of the day-to-day traffic and business that it may happen to inconvenience. Such is the way of life and the background against which the visitor will witness the splendid art, architecture and craftsmanship on display in the Katmandu Valley.

The visitor to Nepal is normally based in Katmandu, the capital and central town of the valley. As a result of rapid development and Westernization over the last ten years, great changes have taken place in this city. However, this is a facade because, hidden away behind it, there is still a wealth of fascinating historic buildings and, of course, the traditional culture and customs. Before embarking on a fact-finding tour regimented by the standard guidebooks, it is very worth while experiencing the quite special atmosphere that pervades Katmandu: the timelessness, the magical quality of light and colour-especially in the morning and the evening-and the intangible sense of urgency and bustle to be found in the busy streets and bazaars. This atmosphere will contribute to your enjoyment of the more formal tours that you will make during your stay in the valley.

Perhaps the most famous bazaar in Katmandu is that of Asan Tol. This is a diagonal road that cuts through the city from the durbar square across the typical north-south, east-west orientated streets. It was probably an old trading or pilgrim route linking Baudha with Swayambhu, the two major Buddhist centres in the valley. Along this street, even today, there is a mass of traditional small shops in typical Newari-style terraced buildings which are the 'front' to a myriad of passages, courtyards and shrines occupied by a family group. Here one finds the traders, the businessmen and the craftsmen in what at first appears to be an unorganized and confused distribution of buildings. However, in each area or tol specific crafts and business are carried out and the confusion is only created by the recent development of the curio trade, each shop vying for a better business site. In the centre of Asan there is still to be found the place where rice, the staple diet of the Nepalese, is traded. It is here that people from all over the valley and beyond will come to buy or sell their crop. The rice, of many different varieties, is heaped up in front of the picturesque Annapurna Temple built in the early part of the nineteenth century. It is in this square that the local farmers from the valley will sell their produce-their vegetables and fruit. It is here that the sacred



cow will wander, scrounging its fodder from an unsuspecting stall-holder. Branching off these main diagonal streets is a network of smaller streets enclosed by tall, terraced, overhanging buildings where you will find the goldsmiths and silversmiths beating out intricate patterns for jewellery, or the bead and bangle shops and the cloth markets behind the Indra Chowk.

While wandering through these streets keep your eyes open for a religious festival, a wedding, or just someone paying homage to his special deity with colourful floral offerings, sweetmeats, incense or butter lamps. If you penetrate deeper into these streets the local and unaffected examples of typical daily life will become apparent: the potters, the mattress-makers and the blacksmiths.

These first searchings into such an unusual culture will be those that you will remember most vividly and, probably more important, they will attune you to the wealth of experiences about to come your way in the following days.

Since their development the towns and villages of the Katmandu Valley have remained almost unaltered in their concept because both the style of living and the building materials have changed only in the last quarter-century.

Fig. 1a.
Katmandu Durbar
Square
(nineteenth-century lithograph)

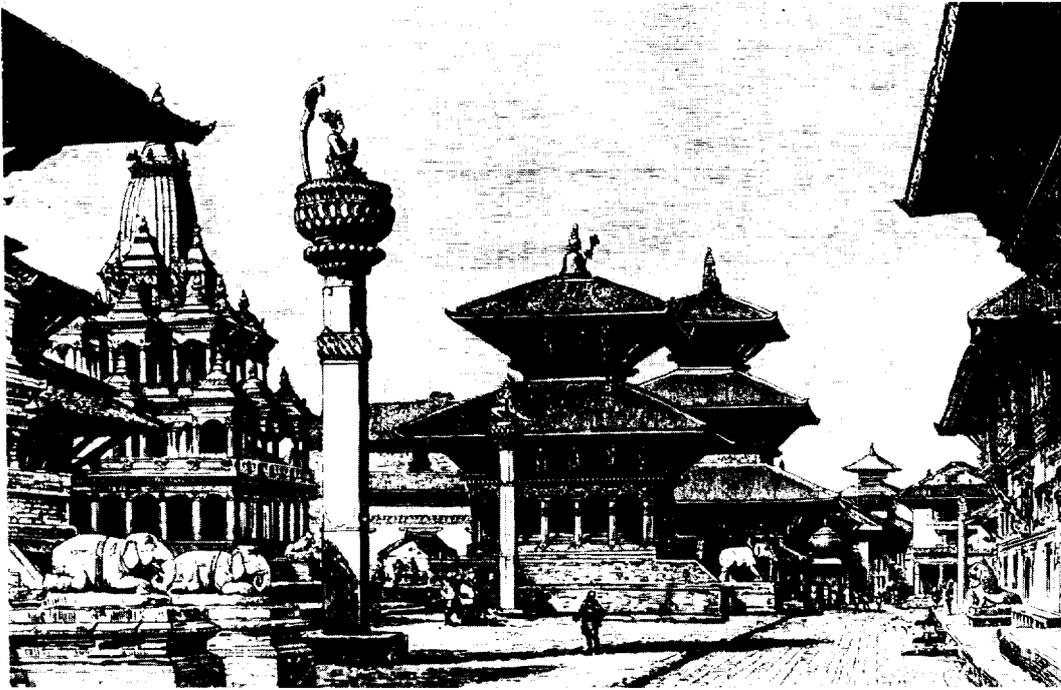


Fig. 1b.
Bhaktapur Durbar
Square
(nineteenth-century
lithograph).

Roads linking one settlement to another follow the original trade routes across the agricultural land between the settlements which have expanded and extended along them over the last few centuries. These road patterns have dictated the development of the cities as opposed to their layouts following some mythological principle.

Many towns and villages lie along the trade routes that criss-cross the valley. The age-old problem of defence and the importance of occupying the least amount of irrigated agricultural land, together with the need for protection against floods, have resulted in many of the settlements being built on high ground in the vicinity of streams and rivers. In spite of many reports that Bhaktapur, Patan and Katmandu had been founded on a mythological principle in the shape of a conch shell, a discus and a sword respectively—the symbols of the deity Manjesuri—it is by no means certain, and these reports need verifying. It seems far more likely that the villages, colonies and settlements have been amalgamated, linked with new roads and surrounded by walls to form the cores of the towns we know.

Today Katmandu lies on the junction of two main trading routes: the north-south route, running between Patan and the

foothills of the Himalayas and the trade with Tibet through Helambhua and Langtang, and the more local route between Swayambhu and Baudha. Patan is quartered by two trade routes linking it with the other two cities, and Bhaktapur lies along a busy market street. Even though the durbar squares, with their palaces and important associated religious buildings, established the centres of power and culture. it was the market streets that gave the towns their alignment. In Bhaktapur, the main street is not the one normally taken into the durbar square, but a road that branches off to the right at the outskirts of the western entry to the town. The foundations of the cities were established long before the siting of the existing durbar squares, a fact that can be easily confirmed by following some of the religious processions that have used the same traditional routes over several centuries. These processions use streets and alley-ways that are quite apart from the newly impressed pattern of both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

The similarity in the development of streets and squares within the towns and cities is linked to the individual building types such as the private houses, the monastic groups and the shrines and temples. These individual elements form the terraces, courtyards and squares which themselves have expanded and developed to form the town districts or *tols* by which localities are known. The streets have no particular name, they are simply located by the *tol* they are in. The most frequently used *tol* names have gained their origin from the temples and monasteries around which they have developed. Other *tol* names reveal something of the socio-economic structure of the area and take their names from the skills or trades of their occupants. Likewise, some of the smaller settlements that have grown up around a particular shrine or temple will derive their names from the deity of the temple.

Besides the three main cities, in the valley there are several other smaller towns and religious settlements, most of which can offer the visitor something of interest whether it be a historic building, a wonderful vista or a traditional craft.

To witness everything of value would take several years. It is therefore my intention to try and limit the scope of this book and to create with you an experience that will remain long after you have forgotten the names and dates of the numerous historic buildings that you will see.

Historical background

Over the past two thousand years the Katmandu Valley has sheltered the dominating power of the central part of the Himalayas, the Kingdom of Nepal. While maintaining an independent existence, the valley has exerted a major influence on the surrounding smaller states, but, unlike them, the valley has enjoyed a relatively continuous development, despite the effects of immigrants and marauders. It has been a constant source of attraction to outsiders because of its location and its wealth of important Buddhist and Hindu shrines. It has always been one of the most important pilgrimage sites for Hindus in the central Himalayas.

The beginnings of Nepal's history are still wholly in the realms of myth and legend. It is popularly believed that the Katmandu Valley was originally a lake—a fact substantiated by geology—and that it was drained by the supernatural intervention of the Bodhisattva Manjusri. Thereafter the Bodhisattva is reputed to have founded the first settlement in the valley. Further traditions connect both the Buddha and the Mauryan emperor Asoka with the valley, but there is as yet no historical or archaeological evidence for either legend.

It is only in the fifth and sixth centuries that the first facts and dates appear. These are recorded on inscriptions and through accounts of their travels by Chinese explorers who describe the Katmandu Valley, then ruled by the Licchavi dynasty. With the Licchavi dynasty we are on firmer ground. From the time of the Buddha the Licchavis were known to have a tribal republic on the northern Gangetic plains and it is probable that the rulers of the Katmandu Valley came from this group as they moved up from the plains around the second and third centuries

A.D. The earliest inscriptions of the Licchavi period are found at Changu Narayan and belong to the fifth century.

The next great contributors to the cultural heritage of Nepal were from the Malla dynasty, which was founded in 1350 by Jayastithi-Malla. His reforming reign ushered in the high period of artistic and architectural activity, much of which is still apparent today. Under the rule of the Mallas a period of relative stability began and lasted almost 600 years. With the death of Jayastithi's grandson, Yaksha-Malla, in 1428, the valley was subdivided between his three sons and the kingdoms of Kantipur, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur, now the cities of Katmandu. Patan and Bhadgaon, were established.

This arrangement meant that the valley became divided into three kingdoms with the consequence that none of the three rulers was powerful enough to prevent the disintegration of his own territory. The kingdoms shrank to city states and disunity arose among the rulers. Constant disunity between the valley kingdoms had almost a positive effect on the arts and architecture. Despite continuous skirmishes, a competitiveness developed and was demonstrated in the erection of even more spectacular temples and palaces.

The division between the petty kingdoms of the valley enabled a small kingdom called Gurkha in central Nepal to become the strongest power in this area. As a result of clever political manoeuvring, the downfall of the Mallas was brought about under the leadership of the Gurkha king, Prithvi Narayan Shah and, with the conquest of the valley, Nepal was finally united under one leader. However, this only came about after a protracted ten-year siege and conquest of individual settlements which led finally to the capture of the three main cities.

About eighty years after the rise to power of Prithvi Narayan Shah, the palace intrigues had increased to such an extent that, in 1845, Jung Bahadur Rana had elevated himself to the position of prime minister and *de facto* ruler of Nepal. For the next 100 years the country was subjected to the rule of the Rana family who kept the country almost totally isolated from the outside world. The Ranas struck up a reasonable relationship with the British, which meant that they travelled not only to India but as far as Great Britain. The result of this contact is strongly reflected in the dramatic change in the style of building that took place. As a result of trading with nearby countries the Arabian style of architecture became apparent, but this was superseded by the extravagance of the neo-classical style prevalent in Great Britain at that time, which was copied by the

itinerant Ranas. The complete turning away from the well-established traditional form and architectural style and from traditional building materials had a marked effect on the continuity of traditional architecture, as well as on the producers of traditional materials, such as brick-makers, metalworkers and wood-carvers.

It was only in 1951 that King Tribhuvan of the Shah dynasty, whose reign began in 1911 and who had been exiled, was able to seek political asylum in India. He returned a year later to Nepal to restore the sovereignty of the crown. Under King Tribhuvan's son, the late King Mahendra, and his grandson, King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev. the present ruler. Nepal has been undergoing a steady and remarkable transformation and accompanying social revolution.

It is only recently, under King Birendra's guidance, that a concerted effort has been made by the Nepalese Government to conserve Nepal's important cultural heritage and to this end the first major restoration programme was undertaken on part of the old royal palace in the Hanuman Dhoka with Unesco's assistance and, later, the rehabilitation of Bhaktapur was started with the assistance of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The traditional buildings that are mostly in evidence throughout the valley today represent the craft and architecture of the Malla dynasty, which started in the fourteenth century, survived the early Shah period, but rapidly faded during the Rana era.

Religion of the people

Perhaps one of the most difficult elements to grasp in the Nepalese people's way of life is their religion. Their religious fervour is indeed intense and devout. Their religious practices, especially Hinduism, follow a typical pattern of physical offering which is extremely colourful, as can be witnessed by the variety and abundance of festivals that take place throughout the year.

When an attempt is made by the uninitiated visitor arriving in Nepal to understand something of the religions practised in the valley, the number and variety of deities immediately apparent are indeed very confusing.

The two main religions prominent in the valley are Hinduism and Buddhism, the former being the religion of the crown, as the king is considered a living incarnation of Vishnu.

Both Hinduism and Buddhism have assimilated many elements of shamanism, an indigenous folk religion based on a belief in supernatural beings, often personifications of natural phenomena, and in the ability of certain people, known as shamans, to communicate with them.

Hindus have always felt that the totality of existence, including God, man and universe, is too vast to be contained within a single set of beliefs. Their religion therefore embraces a wide variety of metaphysical systems or viewpoints, some mutually contradictory. From these, an individual may select one which is congenial to him, or conduct his worship simply on the level of morality and observances. Religious practices differ somewhat from group to group and the average Hindu does not need any systematic or formal creed in order to practise his religion; he need only comply with his family and social group.

One basic concept in the Hindu religion is that of dharma,

which is the following of natural law and the social and religious obligations it imposes. It holds that every person should play his proper role in society and the system of caste, although not essential to philosophical Hinduism, has become an integral part of its social expression. Under this system each person is born into a particular caste whose traditional occupation, which is not necessarily practised, is graded according to the degree of purity or impurity inherent in it.

Other fundamental ideas common to nearly all Hindus concern the nature and destiny of the soul and the basic forces of the universe. Karma is the belief that the consequences of every good or bad action must be fully realized. Rebirth is required by karma in order that the consequences of action may be fulfilled, thus the role an individual must play throughout his life is fixed by his good and evil actions in his previous existences. It is only when the individual soul sees beyond the veil of illusion, the force leading to the belief in the appearance of things, that it is able to realize its identity with that impersonal transcendental reality, brahmin, and escape from the otherwise endless cycle of rebirth.

The three major Hindu gods are Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, personifications of creative, preservative and destructive forces respectively. Almost all Hindus are followers of Vishnu or Siva, or of one of their incarnations, and are known as either Vaishnavites or Shaivites. Shaivites are most common in Nepal although Krishna, one of the incarnations of Vishnu, is quite popular. Siva is a more complex divinity, personifying the awesome and frightening aspects of faith such as the struggle against demons and evil, the potential dangers of knowledge and the fact of death and deterioration. Taken as the supreme being, Siva has also creative and benevolent aspects appearing often under male and female guises. Seen as a mother goddess Siva has two aspects, one beneficent as the goddesses Uma and Parvati, the other aspect, more often stern and terrible, as the goddesses Durga and Kali. In his own guise, perhaps one of Siva's most venerated forms in Pashupati, the Lord of the Animals. Ganesh, the benevolent elephant and master of the troupe of Siva, is a very popular figure in Nepal. He is the son of Siva and Parvati and is the problem-solver, the remover of great obstacles and a god of wealth.

Although many of the high caste families tend to conform to the Hinduism of the brahmin priests and religious texts, a majority of the people, particularly among the lower castes, are much less orthodox in the gods they worship. The ordinary villager

knows relatively little about the concept of the divine unity underlying all things, including gods, and, as a result, his belief is in an impersonal force that controls fate.

Each village tends to have its own patron deities who can often be related to the great deities of the Hindu pantheon. However, more often these deities are personifications of natural phenomena. Much importance is given to shamanism and to the role of the goddess. While gods are usually responsible for protecting village land and resources, goddesses are responsible for the well-being of the group. In addition to village deities, there are other divinities, usually ancestral spirits whose worship tends to be handed down within families and who look after the safety of the family. The majority of the deities are worshipped out of fear for their power and wrath rather than out of love and are very much part of daily life. Religion is seen more as a means of placating and propitiating powerful supernatural beings of uncertain temper rather than as being concerned with offering thanks and devotion to deities of lovable and beneficent guise.

Hinduism has priests but there is no ecclesiastical organization. There are temples but there is no church. The only authority is the Vedic scripts. The priests are from the brahmin castes and act as chaplains to families of the upper castes. The central religious act is public or private worship, the puja, which consists largely of welcoming the god to the company of its worshippers and, depending on the scale of the puja—a private affair or a large public festival—the deity is bathed, dressed, incensed, and worshipped with tire, flowers and sweetmeats and paraded through the streets, or simple offerings are made by an individual. For many worshippers, the idol is the actual deity. However, worship can be carried out without an idol and often an icon or some attribute of the deity can be substituted instead.

In marked contrast to most of the Buddhist festivals, the Hindu functions appear to be far more active and outward demonstrations of worship, whereas Buddhism is more a mental exercise.

Buddhism has its origins in the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, who was born in the Terai of Nepal in about 563 B.C. At the age of 29 he spent six years in meditation after which he attained enlightenment. Thereafter known as the Buddha, he devoted the rest of his life to preaching his doctrine. He accepted or reinterpreted the basic concepts of Hinduism and was intent on restoring a concern with morality to religious life as it had become stifled in ritual details and external observances.

Gautama promulgated these four noble truths : suffering

dominates life ; desire causes suffering ; desire is ended in nirvana ; nirvana or heaven can be achieved by the eightfold path. This path to nirvana is an individual struggle and results in the passing over of the individual self into the eternal self. Individual morality is the means of gaining nirvana and not the observance of caste or priestly rituals. However, the concept of the union of the individual with the void as the end of existence is common to both Hinduism and Buddhism ; the difference is in the means.

Living as they did in close contact with Hinduism, the Buddhist devotees have been very much influenced by their contacts with their Hindu counterparts. There still exists a sense of unity between the two religions, even to the extent that often both religions may use the same temples and worship the same deities and, as tantrism developed, the Buddhist community has adopted many Hindu ideas and gods.

The two main forms of Buddhism are that of Hinayana, which was the earliest form, and Mahayana Buddhism, which developed from the former at about the beginning of the Christian era and was based more on the example of Buddha than on his specific statements. However, the form of Buddhism most practised by the Newars in the Katmandu Valley is that of Vajrayana, an offshoot of Mahayana, and it is here that the philosophical thought of the two religions of Hinduism and Buddhism is very similar. Vajrayana contrasts with Mahayana in its emphasis on tantric religious symbolism but the two types do not differ in their basic beliefs.

The festivals

The many different religious festivals that take place every year form an important part of life in Nepal. As the Nepalese employ the Nepalese calendar or *Bikram Samvat* which does not exactly tally with the Christian calendar, it is very difficult to give the precise equivalent date, so the festivals have been arranged according to the month they may fall in.

There is hardly a week that goes by without some festival taking place. However, whether local or national in character, most of them are associated with one or other of the divinities sacred either to Hindu or Buddhist theology or mythology. All festivals are celebrated with the same verve by both religions, each possibly worshipping different facets of the same god to suit its individual dogma.

Basant Panchami

This festival is held from the end of January to the beginning of February to celebrate the arrival of spring. On this day, the goddess of learning, Saraswati, is worshipped, especially by students about to take their exams. Hundreds of people flock to the Saraswati shrine in Swayambhu, after which they picnic on the grassy slopes below the stupa. At Hanuman Dhoka, the king goes in procession to the Nasal Chowk to hear the recital of the song to spring, in which prayers are offered for a good return of crops in the midst of a colourful ceremony that takes place beneath a specially erected canopy.

Shivaratri

This event is held from the end of February to the beginning of March and is perhaps one of the most spectacular festivals of the year as it attracts people from all over Nepal and the northern regions of India. A great fair, or *mela*, is held in Pashupati, to which literally thousands of people come to pay homage at the most important Hindu shrine in Nepal. They arrive the night before to prepare for their ritual bath in the holy Bagmati River which runs in front of the temple. After this they queue in their thousands to make their offerings of flowers to Lord Pashupati. The rest of the day is spent in feasting, singing and dancing. All the environs of Pashupati are teeming with people ; all the street traders descend on the place to sell their wares, be it fruit, flowers or toys for the children. The road is lined with beggars and there is usually a very colourful collection of sadhus from India, scantily clad in loincloths and ashes with their uncut hair piled high in a topknot upon their head.

The time to visit Pashupatinath is shortly after dawn, as the colour provided by the worshippers as they shed their old clothes and plunge into the freezing waters soon to bedeck themselves in their beautiful red and gold saris before paying homage is one of the most beautiful sights imaginable, especially when the sun penetrates the mist rising off the river. In the evening bonfires are lit at the major crossroads throughout the valley to ward off evil spirits.

Holi

This is often referred to as the Festival of Colour and is of strong Indian Hindu tradition. Held in mid-March, it is a week of fun and revelry, especially among the children who shower each other with coloured water throughout the week. The week culminates in a dangerous day when projectiles filled with coloured water are thrown at any unsuspecting passer-by, all in the search for fun! The only ritual is the erection in the Basantapur Square of a bamboo pole decorated with a colourful mass of streamers at the beginning of the week. To mark the end of the festival, this pole is taken down and burnt.

Ghodajatra

Also held in mid-March, this was originally a Newari festival centred around feasting with friends and worshipping Bhadra-

kali and Kankeswari, two deities who are paraded through the narrow streets of Asan the night before the festival. At the same time, the Demon Gurumpa is feasted on the Tundikhel. On the day of Ghodajatra competitive sports such as horse racing and cycling and a display by the army take place on the Tundikhel. It has now become a kind of military pageant.

Chaitra Dasain and Seto Matsyandranath

These are two separate festivals which occur at the same time, in the third week of March. The Chaitra Dasain is timed to be exactly six months before the Maha Astami day during the festival of Dasain in late September. It is a day when sacrificial offerings are made to Durga, a ritual that takes place at midday. It is also the start of the Katmandu Rath festival. The Seto Machhendra image is taken from its shrine off Asan To1 and is placed in a towering chariot. In all, this festival takes four days to complete, the chariot stopping at specific places each night where the image is worshipped and cared for by the inhabitants of that locality. The chariot, which is towed on 1.8-metre-diameter wheels by hundreds of young boys, is very spectacular, particularly as its scale dwarfs the streets through which it passes. It is usually moved from one stopping place to the other in the early evening. On the fourth or final day the chariot is dragged around a tree in Lagan Khel, after which the deity is transported back to its temple on a small palanquin.

Bisket

The festival is special to Bhaktapur and is perhaps one of the most exciting and frenetic of all the major public festivals. During the mid-April week-long celebrations, the goddesses of Bhairab and Bhadrakali are paraded in chariots throughout the town. The revels start with a major challenge between the inhabitants of the eastern and western halves of the town, who confront one another in a tug of war of surprising dimensions beginning in the square beneath the Nyatapola Temple around dusk. The challenge is to ascertain who is to become hosts to the main deity during the festivities. A j-metre-high chariot is erected in the centre of the square and two long ropes, attached to each end of the chariot, run out along the main streets of the square. The deity is installed and, while she is protected by her guardian

priests, each half of the town endeavours forcibly to drag the chariot into its territory. This battle continues throughout the night until one side retires from exhaustion and accepts defeat. To witness this festival, it is best to go in the company of one of the townsfolk as, often, the participants get a little out of control in their endeavours to win the honour of being hosts to the god. The second stage of the proceedings is to escort the deity to the banks of the river down a steep and twisting road. This is a somewhat taxing undertaking and the passage of the chariot is often hampered by the surging crowds or even a building which may have collapsed in its path. Once the chariot reaches the banks of the river, a long pole is hoisted to commemorate victory during the great battle of Mahabharata. The following day the pole, which is of immense dimensions, is felled to signify the beginning of the Nepalese new year. To give the losers of the tug of war a chance to absolve themselves from the ignominy of their earlier defeat, a return match is held at the end of the festival by which time, it is hoped, their opponents will be handicapped by their excessive feasting.

Rato Machhendranath Jatra

This chariot festival, held in late April, is one of the major festivals of Patan and is similar to the Rath Festival held in Katmandu. The main difference is that it takes a month to complete and the chariot is much larger. The deity is shared with the village of Bungamati, close to Patan, and every twelfth year the chariot itself has to be taken to Bungamati. This is a major undertaking as the road is very hilly and far from smooth. Each year the deity spends three months in Bungamati but in these intervening years it is carried there on a palanquin.

The festival begins in Pulchok where the chariot is built, and for about a month it wends its way through the streets of Patan. Because of its immense size, members of the army are called upon to assist in pulling the chariot. The culmination of the festival is at Jawalakhel when the bejewelled tunic, supposedly belonging to the serpent king, is publicly displayed, on a specially selected day, in front of the king. The purpose of the festival is to ensure a satisfactory monsoon for the rice crop in the paddy fields.

Buddha Jayanti

As Nepal is the birthplace of Lord Buddha, his birthday is celebrated with great veneration throughout the country in mid-May. Special ceremonies take place in the major Buddhist sites of Swayambhu and Baudha, with both processions and large prayer gatherings in the neighbouring monasteries. Pilgrims come from all over Nepal to these sites to celebrate Buddha Jayanti and they make a very colourful scene.

Janai Purnima

This festival in early August mainly concerns the brahmins but most Hindus will nevertheless participate. The brahmins bathe in the sacred rivers of the Vishnumati and the Bagmati, after which they change the sacred thread worn across their chest. Other people have yellow sacred threads tied round their wrist to protect them from the dangers of the coming year. On this day, thousands of people visit the Kumbheswar Temple in Patan where they bathe in the sacred waters which supposedly come from the holy lakes in Gosainkund set at over 4,000 metres in the foothills above the valley. The courtyard around Kumbheswar is a very colourful sight during this festival as, after their symbolically cleansing bath, the throngs of people pay homage to the beautiful gold and silver linga, usually kept in the temple but which on this day is placed on a platform in the middle of the tank reached only along a narrow plank.

Gaijatra

Held in early August, this festival, akin to a carnival, takes place in Katmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur with only slight variations on a central theme. Families in which deaths have occurred during the previous year will send a cow, or a young child masquerading as a cow, in procession around the streets of the city as a tribute to the deceased and to assist their entry into heaven. This procession takes place during the morning and is followed in the afternoon with a further more carnival-like procession when participants mimic the social and political scene of the day. The processions staged in Bhaktapur are perhaps the most

extensive and amusing, with a wide range of tableaux typifying all aspects of the people's culture. The festival lasts about eight days, the first and second day being the most important. On the second day, an important Buddhist festival known as Mataya takes place when all the viharas (Buddhist monasteries or temples) of Patan are visited in sequence. As there are as many as 150 viharas, this is a formidable undertaking. Offerings are made by the pilgrims and butter lamps are lit along the route.

Teej-Brata

This three-day festival, held at the end of August, is especially observed by women. It consists of a period of fasting together with a ritual cleansing in the Bagmati River. Women, dressed in their finery, flock to Pashupati to bathe in the river and afterwards to worship at the shrine of Lord Pashupati, creating a very colourful spectacle along the river bank.

Indrajatra

Held at the beginning of September, this is perhaps one of the most important and certainly the most spectacular of all the Nepalese festivals, celebrated by both Hindus and Buddhists alike. The festival lasts for about eight days during which time there is much rejoicing, dancing and ceremony. On the first day, a long pole is erected close to Hanuman Dhoka to propitiate Indra, the god of rain. After its erection there is a colourful display of classical dancing by masked dancers. On the third day, the living goddess Kumari is brought out into the streets in her special chariot and is accompanied by her attendants, Ganesh and Bhairab, represented by two young boys. It is on this day that the king attends the festivities, is entertained by the masked dancers and also pays homage to Kumari. Throughout the cities, many wooden masks of Bhairab are exhibited and at certain times of the day local beer pours forth from their mouths through a spout to revive the local revellers. Indra, with his arms outstretched, can also be seen at vantage points, set atop a high platform. History records that it was on this day that King Prithvi Narayan Shah conquered Katmandu and unified Nepal. Throughout the festival, many staged displays of classical dancing and religious tableaux can be seen in the Katmandu Duibar Square.

Durga Puja-Dasain

Held from the end of September to the beginning of October, Durga Puja is the national festival of Nepal and lasts in all fifteen days. It is a time for family reunion and for rejoicing, therefore most of the festival's activities take place within the family group as it is often the only time throughout the year when the whole family is together. The basic theme of the festival is the conquest of evil ; legend has it that during the time of this festival Ram Chandra vanquished Ravana of Lanka. On Phulpati, the day of flowers, there is a colourful procession to Hanuman Dhoka attended by the king.

The following day, Maha Astami. Durga is feted and thousands of buffaloes and goats are sacrificed at shrines all over the country symbolizing the cleansing of the soul. It is on this day that the Taleju shrines in the main cities are opened to the faithful and throughout the night thousands of pilgrims flock to pay homage. The following days are spent in family gatherings, and on Bijaya Dasami relatives visit the house of their elders to receive their blessing and *tikka*.

Tihar

Over a period of five days in late October various animals and gods are worshipped and houses are lit up at night with hundreds of candles ; sadly, these are being replaced with electric lights. On the first day the crow, which symbolizes Yama Duta, the messenger of death, is called to the house and fed. Dogs are feted and garlanded on the second day, as they are the mounts of Bhairab. On the third day, the cow-as an incarnation of Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity-is worshipped, and on the last day brothers are feted by their sisters with garlands and sweetmeats and they are in turn rewarded with money. Every evening Laxmi is paid special attention and her footprints traced by worshippers can be seen leading to their safes or treasure boxes. During this period the Newari new year is celebrated with much feasting and gambling.

Development of building styles

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the Nepalese cultural heritage is the smallness of its actual limits. A few traditional-style temples have been built in the larger provincial settlements of central Nepal and an occasional example of a copy, the result of the whim of some rich merchant, can be discovered in the foothills of the Himalayas, but the major historical culture has been concentrated in the Katmandu Valley itself. Nowadays, the exquisite craft of Nepalese wood-carving is recognized far beyond the confines of the valley, even beyond Nepal, but the valley is its source and its home. In terms of artistry and craftsmanship, when one speaks of Nepalese culture it is in the early stages almost exclusively a Newari culture.

From the early part of Nepal's history, there remain only a few examples of building history, all of which are either ruined or consist of small and large stupas, memorials to holy men, which are solid structures and mostly of archaeological rather than architectural interest.

The culture which concerns us is the result of much later history, as late as the seventeenth century, and is in the form of the traditional Newari temples and palaces which are abundant in the Katmandu Valley. However, there are many surviving ruins of earlier buildings now incorporated in newer ones, earlier doors and windows or pillars supporting roof struts, which can often be dated by inscriptions. There are a few inscribed stones of very early periods, but they can no longer be related to the buildings as they are seen today. Nepal gives the impression of being a remarkable survival of the Indian Middle Ages ; in fact, its buildings are seldom as old as the medieval period of Europe. However, the impression may not be so false,

as it seems certain that the seventeenth-century builders were deliberately perpetuating earlier styles, just as the craftsmen were striving to produce earlier forms of art.

The first and most striking error perpetuated in most travel and history books refers to the multistoreyed temples rather than to the temples with multitiered roofs. More often than not the roofs do not correspond with the floor levels, if in fact there are any definable floor levels as such in a temple. Such a differentiation is very important as most of the temples comprise mainly a sanctuary cella on the ground floor, over which there is intentionally unoccupied space. In the case of only a very few temples, where the shrine containing the deity occupies an upper floor, is there more than one floor.

The concept of the temple, as opposed to the small shrine, follows the basic ideal of any religious building to construct, as an act of worship and dedication to a god, the finest building that the worshippers are capable of producing. The sense of greatness is nearly always achieved by height and the qualities of proportion and perspective are something very special to this style. There is, however, one great difference when comparing the Nepalese temple to those of the Christian church or the Mohammadan mosque. The latter two are designed to accommodate large congregations gathered for corporate worship, whereas the former is intended for private individual worship -the puja. The sanctuary, often a mere 0.5 square metres, houses the image of the deity only. The puja enables private communion between the worshipper and the god under cover of the projecting roof. Even during large family festivals the principle of individual worship is maintained as, when the leader has performed the necessary rites for the whole gathering, individual worship then follows. Large public festivals are held in open spaces around the temples where numerous rest-houses, or *pathis*, of all shapes and sizes provide the necessary shelter for the pilgrims.

Concern for periods and datable styles may, in the case of Nepalese architecture, become irrelevant because here the art is expressed in a traditional form as opposed to an individual form, for its vitality consists not in the development of personal expression, but in the perpetuation of what is traditionally correct. Of course, there is a form of development and this can be seen in the way that the traditional craftsmen are progressing today when faced with the problems of repairing a former building, but it is obviously slower and incidental, while the main forms have remained unchanged for centuries. Thus, while

marked variations in quality and decoration can be discerned in the wood-carving and the standard building details, it is probable that the actual building styles have undergone little change. More marked changes in traditions took place with the advent of the first major Western influence during the Rana rule.

There are certain styles of architecture that are easily recognizable and which can be roughly dated into centuries. Unlike European architecture, there appears to have been little development in building styles. There are purely local variations in the type of decoration and this is usually dictated by the divinity housed within the structure.

The traditional style

The most interesting and the most prolific form is the brick-built temple with diminishing tiered roofs. It seems to be generally agreed now that it is the survival of an Indian style, long since discontinued in its land of origin. The survival of this style in certain remote areas of India and also the descriptions given by Chinese pilgrims of Indian temples which they saw over a thousand years ago confirms this. Fortunately, it is not just the building as a type that survives in Nepal, but a whole style of architecture which may owe much to India now existing as something distinctly Nepalese.

Although they are all based on the same conceptual idea, the temples differ in shape and size. To achieve the sense of height and majesty they are mostly set on a diminishing stepped plinth, are built of brick—often the special glazed brick—and carved timbers support a heavy pitched roof construction. The roof is covered with tiles bedded in a clay base. The top roof is capped with a pinnacle-gajur—often very ornate and, on some of the more important temples, of gilded copper. The temples can be free-standing or attached to a terrace of houses. They can be square, rectangular or even octagonal in plan and their size can vary from a small 4.6-metre structure to something the size of the Taleju Temple in Katmandu, which is well over 37 metres high. There appears to be no guiding influence for the number of roof tiers. Most temples have three roofs, the smaller ones, mostly attendant shrines, only two roofs and temples dedicated to Pashupati, which are often of sizeable proportions, have large projecting roofs. There are only two free-standing temples with five-tiered roofs. The Basantapur Tower in the Hanuman Dhoka Palace has five roof tiers, but this is not a religious building.



Fig. 2.
A traditional Nepa-
Iese temple (Kasi
Biswanath).

The shikhara

Another striking building style that has become fairly common over the last two centuries is the shikhara, a brick or stone temple of geometrical shape with a tall central spire rising to the heavens, suggesting the peaks of the surrounding mountains. On each of the four elevations porticoes are attached, usually set above a colonnaded arcade, which are said to symbolize the entrances to rock caves. Like most other religious buildings, the shikhara is set on a diminishing stepped plinth and built around a small sanctuary containing the deity. The structure, usually symmetrical in form with a spire of solid construction, is capped



Fig. 3.
The shikhara—a
typical example
(Batsala Durga).

with a pinnacle, often of gilded copper. The stone-built shikharas are generally of rather special quality, as stone buildings, because of the lack of good building stone, are not very common in the valley. As a result, most of the stone structures have been sponsored by royalty and are generally to be found only in the durbar squares. One shikhara of particular note, the Maha Baudha in Patan, is actually constructed in terracotta.

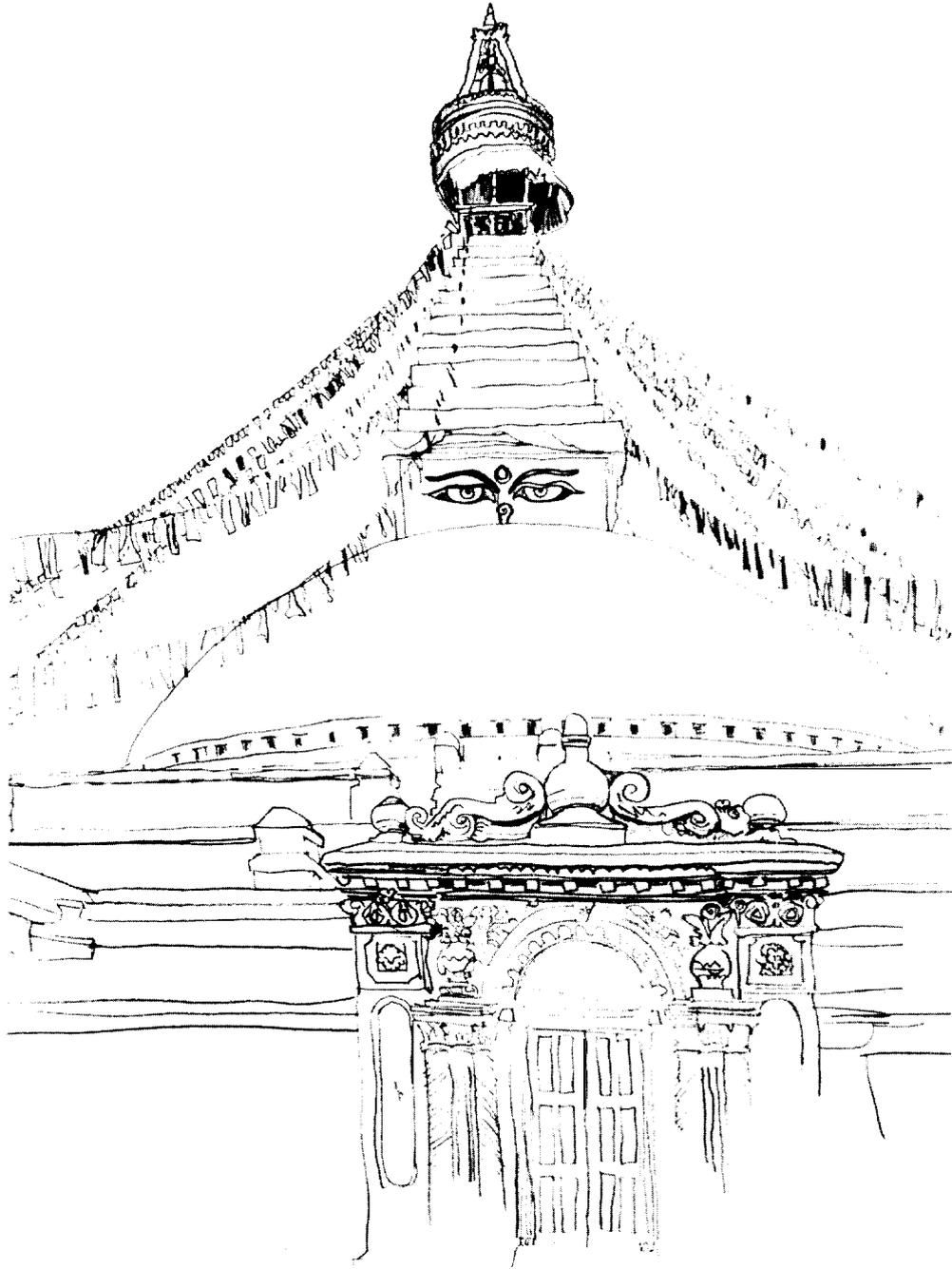
The shikhara is the typical building style of most Hindu shrines in India and it entered Nepal as a style only in the seventeenth century. Many of the Nepalese shrines are, in fact, direct copies of famous Indian shrines.

The stupa and chaitya

The stupa and chaitya are dedicated exclusively to Lord Buddha and are solid hemispherical structures enshrining a relic of the Buddha, whether it be his mortal remains as in the case of the stupa at Swayambhu or some of his belongings, such as his garments or personal effects. The smaller stupas, or chaityas, as they are known, usually contain prayers (mantras), holy scripts or more especially in the hill areas, the mortal remains of an important and holy lama.

The stupas vary greatly in size, from the massive Structure at Baudha to some of the smaller versions to be found in the towns. Their construction is basically the same ; the hemispherical mound is either made-up ground, or a small hillock or rocky outcrop from which, as is the case at Swayambhu, the mound is formed. According to tradition, this mound of earth often covers a series of small chaityas grouped around a central one. Centrally placed on the mound there is a small square structure-chaku-which supports the elaborate, usually gilded, pinnacle, of thirteen stages, on the base of which are the features unique to Nepal-the far-seeing eyes of the Buddha surveying the cardinal points. The third-century Asok stupas of Patan are, however, much simpler in form and have only a plain brick chaku. The mounds of the later stupas are generally covered with brick or lime concrete and whitewashed. During the major Buddhist festivals the dome is decorated with yellow clay poured over the dome to make it resemble the lotus flower.

Fig. 4.
The stupa or chaitya
(Bandhanath).



The traditional Newari house

The development of urban settlements and of the street patterns within these has usually meant that domestic dwellings are formed either of groups of interlocking courtyards in the more dense areas, or of terraced lines facing onto a street or thoroughfare. In the latter case, a less controlled form of courtyard development of inferior structures interlocked by a series of enclosed passages at ground level may grow up. These may run beneath the dwellings, and link the various courtyards. The buildings that overlook the main thoroughfares and those that occupy key positions in large enclosed spaces are usually of architectural importance. Their façades are generally symmetrical and contain finely detailed and carved windows and doors. Symmetry is achieved on a central axis on each succeeding floor, with the central window of each floor emphasized by its size and quality of detail. The houses usually have two or three storeys above a ground floor and there is seldom any order to the placing of individual units in either quality or size; the symmetry exists only relative to an individual building. Where the ground floor is not used as a shop front or a workshop, the lower part of the elevation remains simple and unadorned with a low door flanked by two small windows on either side. Irregularities that may occur at this level are never reported in the more formal layout of the upper storeys. Externally, the living area is marked by a special window consisting of either three or five bays. These windows can be of two different but standard patterns; one being a canted projecting bay of windows, the other a projecting but vertical bay of windows. The bays may consist of units of odd numbers, three or five, and on the more important buildings these two standard patterns are combined vertically to form a very impressive and imposing central axis for the building.

Formerly, the typical window style was of horizontal influence with squared lattice work. Only 200 years ago, window designs started to change and to become more vertical in form, but they still retained the lattice work. At the turn of this century, the trend was towards lighter and larger windows, lattice work was omitted and iron railings and shutters were introduced to close the now predominantly vertical style of window.

Particular utilization of the rooms is decided by their vertical orientation and is not dependent on the room size. Despite variations in size and external decoration, common principles of space utilization developed in all social groups.

Fig. 5.
Traditional Newari dwellings.

A central spine wall normally divides the ground floor into two narrow rooms, the front half overlooking the street usually serving as a shop or workshop, the rear portion as a place for storage. Living and sleeping quarters begin on the first floor and the location of specific functions is dictated by the size of the house and the number of families using it, as married sons, by tradition, take up residence with their families in their parental home.

In the common three-storeyed house, the second floor is the main living and family area. The spine wall is replaced by a row of twin columns forming a large, well-ventilated, low hall-like room suitable for family gatherings. On the exterior, large and finely carved windows emphasize the position of this living area. Both the kitchen and the family shrine are located in the attic space. Because of their religious significance, strangers and members of lower castes should never enter the kitchens or shrines of higher caste dwellings.



The Buddhist monastery

The various types of Buddhist monastery in the Katmandu Valley-as opposed to the monastic buildings of the northern regions-are called viharas. This term encompasses basically two styles, the *bahil* and the *bahal*.

The *bahil*, set on a raised platform above street level, is a two-storeyed structure surrounding an enclosed square courtyard. Except for the main entrance, consisting of a small centrally placed doorway flanked by two blind windows in the main elevation, the ground floor is totally sealed off from the outside. Arcaded porticoes on all four elevations overlook the internal yard. Directly opposite this main entrance is the free standing shrine with a clearly defined passage-way around it. The shrine itself is a small dark and simple rectangular room containing the image. To the left of the entrance there is a stone staircase leading to the upper floor. Over the main entrance there is a projecting window forming the central axis to the main façade.

The *bahal* is again a two-storeyed building enclosing a courtyard, but unlike the *bahil*, its floor areas on both ground and upper floors are subdivided into several room units. The building is generally of a more robust construction, is set on a low plinth and overlooks a sunken square courtyard. The main entrance door, flanked on either side by windows, leads into a foyer with benches. As before, the main shrine is situated directly opposite this entrance and consists of a large enclosed room containing the main divinity. The two flanking internal wings contain an open hall, similar to the entrance foyer overlooking the courtyard. Set in the four corners of the building there are stairways to the upper floor, each with a separate doorway leading from the courtyard. Each of the narrow stairways leads to a group of three rooms, which form a separate unit with no intercommunicating doors or passages.

Perfect symmetry has been achieved by generally projecting the central and corner sections of the brickwork on all façades and by the placement of windows and doors on a central axis. Each window is designed according to its location in the façade and those occupying the axial position are of a typical *bahal* style. Although constructed of unglazed brick, the quality of the brickwork is excellent and is usually left exposed on the external façades. The interior façades are, however, usually rendered with a mud plaster and whitewashed. The entrance to the *bahal* and to the main shrine is indicated by a highly carved wooden tympanum or toran.

The Hindu priest house or math

The Nepalese form of the priest house is clearly distinct from the monastic buildings of Buddhism. First, it is not bound by such specific rules and secondly its location, orientation and internal planning correspond closely to that of a typical dwelling. The larger math generally comprises several smaller house units centred around a courtyard. It is usually a three-storeyed building of solid construction, with elevations resembling those of a residential house. It is fully integrated into a terrace of houses along a street or overlooking a square and may only be recognized by the superior quality of its decoration.

The variety and number of courtyards may differ and their particular uses are also governed by their size and quality. However, utilization of space on the different floor levels is essentially similar to that of the ordinary domestic dwelling. The ground floors serve as stables, stores, servants' quarters and guardrooms and there are usually shrines dedicated to Siva and a puja room. The first and second floors contain living-rooms, guest-rooms and sleeping quarters, whereas the third floors contain the private shrine and the kitchen area.

The exterior façades and the most important courtyard façades are usually faced with the high quality glazed bricks and the windows are heavily carved, as are the cornices and the brick lintels over the windows. The interior walls are generally of good quality plain brickwork. The public areas such as the stables, meeting-places, etc., are paved with clay tiles while the shrines are paved with stone slabs. The more domestic rooms have simple mud floors. Occasionally, the rooms occupied by the chief priest are more ornately decorated than the rest with painted panels adorning the walls. The internal walls are otherwise plastered with mud and whitewashed.

Dharmahala : the public rest-house

A building type common to all towns and villages is the *dharmahala* or public rest-house, a place where travellers or pilgrims may rest free of charge. In Nepal, these rest-houses can range from the simple *patti*, a small shelter usually at the intersection of important routes, to the more impressive buildings attached to or surrounding an important temple or shrine, or the man-

dapa which formerly served as the town assembly hall. These public rest-houses were generally donated by wealthy individuals, religious groups or families, who were also responsible for their upkeep and maintenance.

The smallest of the group is the *patti*, a small raised and covered platform which is either free-standing or incorporated into a dwelling. The layout of each *patti* is almost identical and consists of a rectangular brick platform covered with wooden floorboards. As it is sited to overlook the access routes, the front is always open and of simple post and lintel construction.

The *sattal* is a general term for the more compound-type of public building. Unlike the *patti*, the *sattal* seems to have been built not only for the transient traveller but also for longer sojourns by members of religious communities. Idols and shrines erected in *sattals* are, for the most part, features of later origin as they were seldom included in the original concept of the structure.

The two-storeyed *patti-type* of *sattal* is commonly found in the durbar squares and might originally have quartered a part of the palace guard or other military unit. In such cases the building is a little longer than is otherwise expected. The typical two-storeyed unit consists of a simple rectangular platform with a small door at the rear leading into the shrine. Otherwise, similar to the *patti*, it is open on three sides. The upper floor is reached by an external stairway at the back of the *sattal*. This upper floor area is extended by cantilevering the floor over the front and side walls. On the upper floor there is another shrine, usually housing a private divinity and placed directly above the shrine below.

The mandapa is a square, single or multistoreyed building which serves many functions similar to those of a *patti*, yet it was mainly designed to be used as a community or reception hall. It is generally a free-standing open pavilion, facilitating large gatherings of people in or around it. It is always found within settlements and has its own particular importance. Unlike the simple *patti*, this type is open on all sides. The roof is supported by an outer ring of pillars and a further four central pillars. In some cases, a further upper floor is constructed with a separate roof, following the typical temple structure. This upper floor is only accessible through a small hatch in the ceiling of the lower floor, and is used during festivals for the exposition of divinities, such as Indra during the festival of Indrajattra. For this reason there are canted open balcony windows on all four sides. The sizes of the mandapa type vary considerably according to the

size of the town or settlement they are serving, hence the Kasthamandapa in the centre of Katmandu is, as can be expected, the largest to be found.

The traditional palace

All the palaces are recognizable for their extravagant style and, in the major cities, for their scale and complexity. The relative proportions of these buildings are always much bigger than the general domestic scale ; not only are the rooms larger, but all the elements appear larger and more splendid, as these palaces were doubtless prestige buildings and often constructed in competition with the rival petty kingdoms in the valley. The palaces exhibit, therefore, perhaps the best examples of their period of architecture, since the local craftsmen were encouraged to produce the finest quality of workmanship in recognition of their patrons and sponsors. The palaces are very solidly built, not as fortresses, as would be expected, but as elements of artistic and architectural beauty. They incorporate the qualities of religious architecture as well as those of monastic and domestic architecture.

The Rana Palace

Perhaps the only major and dramatic change in the styles of architecture in Nepal can be seen in the relatively recent arrival of the over-life-size white stucco palaces introduced by the former Rana prime ministers. This style is barely recognized today for its unique contribution to Nepal's architecture. Most of these palaces, which are of colossal proportions when compared to the style of architecture prevailing when they first appeared, and boast of several thousand rooms and scores of courtyards, not to mention all the buildings scattered throughout the compounds, were built in a couple of years. The materials used were all available locally-bricks, mud mortar, timber and floor tiles. Only the 'new' style of interlocking roof tiles had to be imported and even these were soon manufactured in the valley. The external decorative stucco work was executed in the local clays, copying the intricate designs at that time popular in Europe. The interiors were lavishly furnished with reproduction period furniture and decorated with exquisite crystal chandeliers and mirrors, all conforming to the elaborate neo-classical revival that

was taking place in Europe at the time. This colossal style of building had never been experienced before and, as a result, some of the finer points of both structural and detailed design suffered.

The interiors were laid out on a grand scale with large state rooms, extensive family accommodation and vast areas of cramped living quarters for the family retinue and staff. Undoubtedly, the palaces were pretentious status symbols and, although they were basically of identical construction, they varied in both scale and decoration.

These extraordinary palaces now represent in Nepal a politically unstable period in the country's history ; nevertheless, they also stand as a unique example of a style of architecture and an important period in the development of the towns and cities of the Katmandu Valley.

Crafts and craftsmen

One of the most rewarding aspects of the Hanuman Dhoka Conservation Project described later was the results achieved under restrictions imposed by relying almost entirely on local resources and materials. It was necessary to simplify and adapt modern conservation methods to the use of local materials and local techniques. Various castes were employed in different processes : the Kau or Newari blacksmiths were responsible for much of the metalwork and the wind bells were made in a number of different households in Patan, especially by the Newari Tammo caste. Copper roofing in the Kirtipur Tower was replaced by craftsmen from the Tamrakar caste.

The rediscovery of the method of making the original *telia* brick used in the Malla building era was a considerable achievement. The *telia* brick had no longer been used in Nepalese architecture and its technique was completely forgotten.

In the conservation project it was necessary to replace many of the defective bricks with sound ones. The practice previously had been to use salvaged bricks. But this is not a satisfactory method as there is a growing demand for bricks and more and more historic buildings are being dismantled. The importance of rediscovering the technique of making the *telia* brick was vital to the success of future repair and conservation work.

The fact that the brick is called *telia*, which means oiled, led us astray during our first experiments. We were unable to find any practical information about its manufacture and had to resort to direct experimentation. These initial efforts were made in the traditional brick fields and, although it was unlikely that we should produce a brick resembling in any way the original model, we were able to draw quite a crowd. Having covered

ourselves in mud and oil, much to the enjoyment of the on-lookers, a voice from the back of the crowd soon called out that we were not making the bricks correctly. The old man who had called out disappeared to collect his tools and then returned to demonstrate our incompetence. A second old man then pronounced this effort also incorrect. Arguments between the two men, however, led to some sort of compromise and the bricks were made and then fired. The results stood up almost perfectly to several comparative tests with the original bricks. Samples of the new bricks and the originals were paired and sent to a specialist in London for chemical analysis. The report was barely able to differentiate between the two products.

Many varieties of brick were made and in each case the wedge shape was preserved. We have so far made header bricks, stretcher bricks and corner bricks with slip glazing on two faces. There are also many different bricks required for mouldings

fig. 6,
A craftsman at work.

over windows and patterned terracottas which will need further experiments later.

After initial runs of small quantities of bricks, in which the process was perfected, an order for 10,000 bricks was placed with a local brick kiln and the bricks produced have matched up to the original samples.

Among the arts of Nepal perhaps the best known is the wood-carving that adorns both domestic and religious buildings. This is a craft that developed among the Newar tribes in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries during the Malla rule. Today it is still maintained by these same tribes. However, the demand from commercial enterprises gives them little opportunity to practise their art form.

The Katmandu Valley is the main stronghold of Nepalese culture and has important examples of art. The royal palaces of the valley promoted the local arts and the best examples of each period of Nepalese art are found in the buildings which comprise these palace ensembles.

Windows and floors are provided with a series of unique surrounds and mouldings. Cornices are built up of basic shapes which are derived from heads, birds or vegetal motifs. Each of these is a unique individual element.

The Vilas Mandir of the Hanuman Dhoka Conservation Project contains some of the finest examples of technique and artistry in its wood-carving. The lower struts of the Basantapur Tower are also particularly fine, as are the windows of both buildings. The grille work of these windows is created by a very complicated geometric interlocking construction. Over fifteen

patterns have been discovered in this group of buildings alone, as well as several simpler forms. Unfortunately, the present condition of these windows has suffered badly from deterioration due to time, saturation of the struts, and distortion and loss due to earthquakes. They have also been heavily overpainted in an effort to overcome their tawdry appearance. We are, therefore, faced not only with problems of replacement and repair, but also with the careful cleaning and conservation of the remaining examples to consolidate this disappearing art form.

Among other aims set out in the proposals of this conservation project were the revival of interest in wood-carving and the setting up of a local or family wood-carving guild. This guild would be registered with the conservation project office as capable of producing artistic rather than commercial work. The people would be employed to carry out conservation and restoration work such as that described above and also to work on any new religious building that might require carving. As a long-term policy this would maintain the original wood-carving tradition and ensure skilled and willing craftsmen for conservation. It is also hoped that such work might increase the incomes for these families.

When the project was in its early stages, efforts were made to discover wood-carvers. The general opinion at that time was that there would be little hope of finding any reliable and skilled artisans. This would have meant that the future work of conservation was far from secure in Nepal as it would have been impossible to train carvers without some traditional expertise. We were delighted to discover a reliable and competent team of traditional wood-carvers and up to forty of these worked for us on the conservation project.

As they work these artisans seem to relive their traditional craft and their work becomes part of their religion. There appears to be a strict control of the type of work each man can perform based upon experience and competence. The task of 'opening' or carving the eyes of an image of a god can be carried out by only three men in Bhaktapur. This honour is handed down from generation to generation and is passed onto the next man only after certain religious rites have been performed.

It is fair to say that carving was a dying tradition in Nepal and the men employed in the conservation project claim that they were only able to practise their craft one month in a year. Most of these artisans worked with the project for its duration and their work improved rapidly. Their application was admir-

able even though many of them had to travel seven miles to work each day.

Working in close collaboration with the carvers was a large cleaning section consisting of a team of over fifty girls. All the carved woodwork and brickwork was heavily encrusted with paint which has had to be removed by this team. Under the direction of the Conservation Laboratory part of the conservation project these girls have now been trained in the processes of cleaning.

At first it seemed that we would only be able to clean a few sections of the building as we thought that all the work would have to be executed *in situ*. We soon discovered, however, that much of the woodwork of the windows and struts could be safely removed and more conveniently cleaned away from the building. A cleaning section was set up near by. The problem of dismantling, cleaning and replacing each piece of carving to its precise original position was overcome by the simple but effective device of numbering each piece. Thus, every piece of carving, of which there must have been somewhere around fifteen thousand, was referenced together with a drawing. Each piece kept its number throughout its cleaning, repairing and chemical treatment. The number was only removed once it had been replaced and checked against the original in the drawing. In this way, the principles of conservation were faithfully followed and there was no falsification of historical evidence.

As mentioned earlier, the carvings had previously been painted. In many cases, there was evidence of up to eight layers of colour. After initial cleaning experiments, it was generally agreed that the carvings should not be repainted. Historical evidence for unpainted woodwork was discovered recently when a nineteenth-century building was dismantled revealing older wood carving previously concealed and not coated with paint.

The brickwork was also heavily painted covering the original glaze. It was only after closely examining the building that it was discovered that paint had been used to achieve unifying effects in buildings which were constructed in several phases and with different qualities of brickwork. Fortunately, the paint was mostly a distemper or water paint and could easily be removed by washing. Even so, the building had to be washed from its top to the ground, quite a remarkable feat as you stand back and look at the awe-inspiring result.

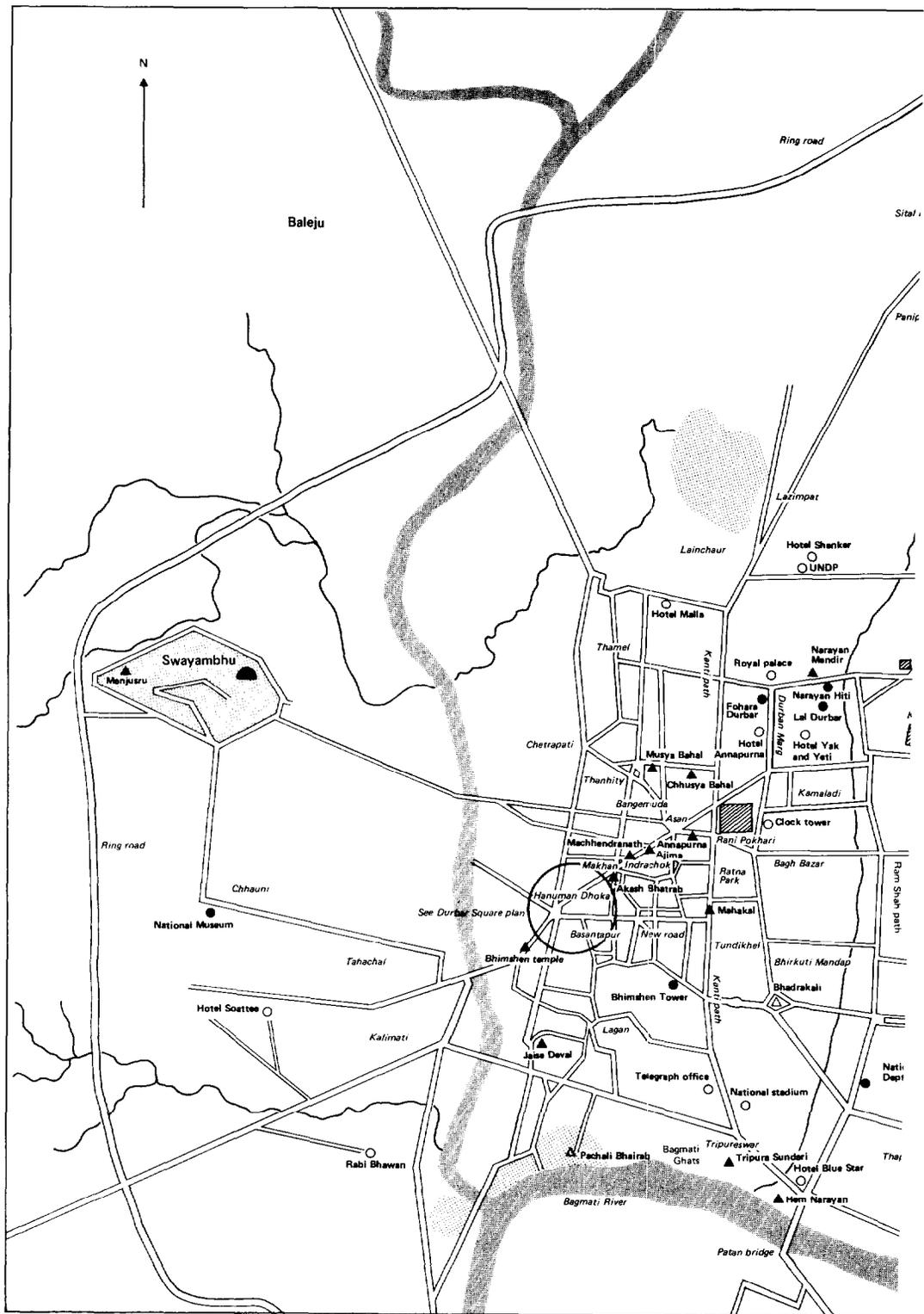
Hanuman Dhoka Durbar

The tour through this, the most fascinating of the durbar squares, will take you first through the accessible parts of the palace and afterwards to some of the associated buildings to be found around the palace complex.

There is no building in the present Hanuman Dhoka complex that dates back to before the Malla period. However, there is every indication that the present site of the durbar could have been used in the Licchavi period. As it stands today this old royal palace spans many centuries and differing building styles and uses. The complex is made up of a least ten different courtyards or chowks. The original Malla durbar consisted of only two of these chowks, the existing Mohan Chowk and one other that has subsequently disappeared. Guarding the entrance to the palace is the palace's namesake, Hanuman, the monkey god. He was a great patron to the Mallas as they claimed descent from Ram Chandra, whose devotion to Hanuman was legendary. The symbol of Hanuman was therefore used extensively and an image was generally placed at the entrance to the palaces as protection and to bring victory in war. This stone image was erected by Pratap Malla in 1672. It is difficult to recognize the features of the monkey as it is covered in an ever thickening layer of red *tikka*, an offering that devotees place on its forehead. Periodically, a new red cape is draped over its shoulders and the specially decorated umbrella is changed yearly.

To the right of Hanuman, the gilded door of the main entrance to the palace is flanked by a pair of stone lions, ridden by Siva to the left and Shakti to the right. They probably date from Malla times.

The door, however, is of a later period as an inscription



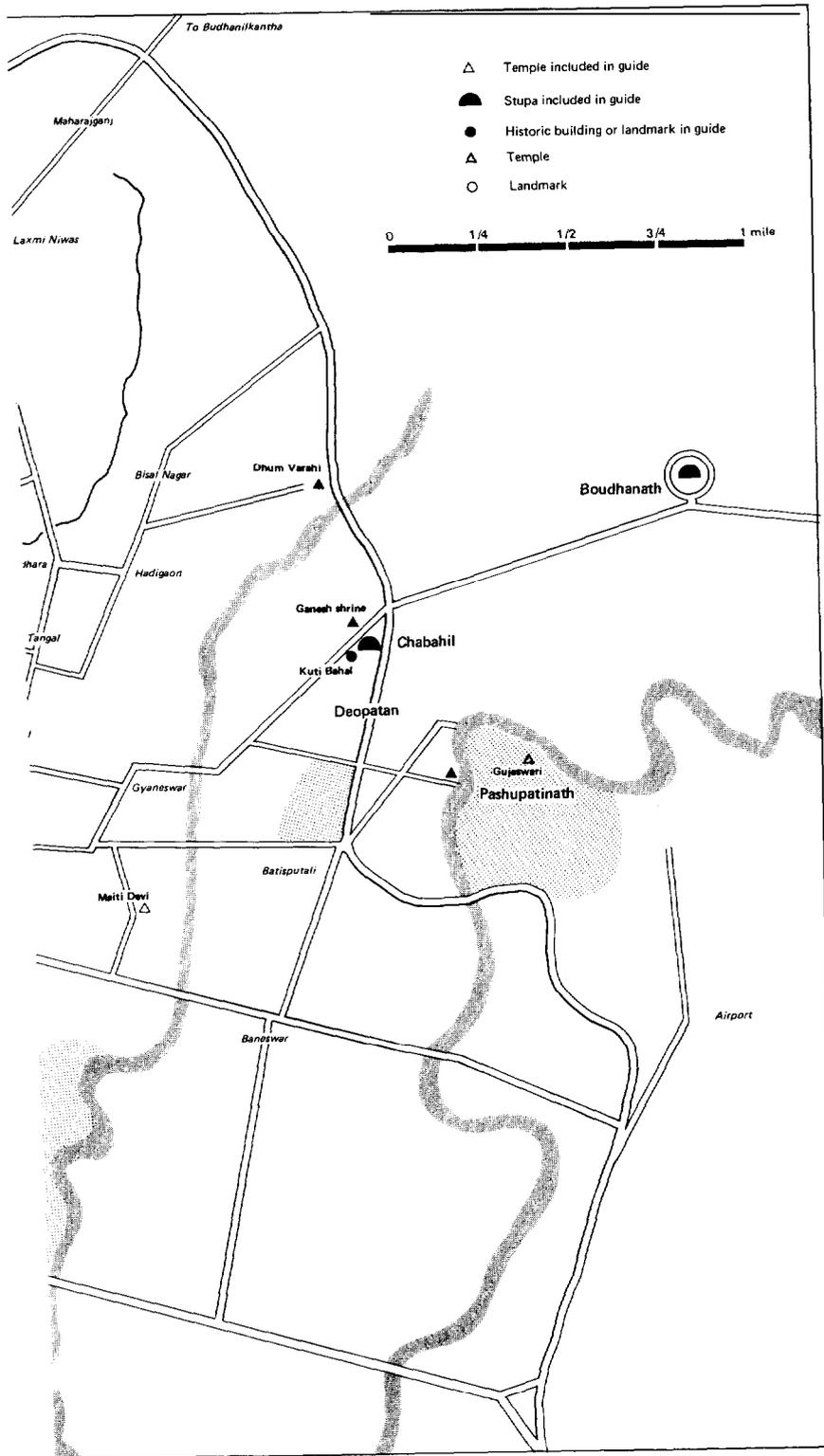


Fig. 7.
Katmandu city map.

above dates its construction as 1810. The funds for this piece of extravagance were provided by gathering hundreds of outdated copperplate inscriptions which were then sold to provide the gold for gilding the ornate gate.

Above the golden door there are three interesting images. The central figures are said to be Krishna, Biswarupa and Arjun portraying a scene from the Mahabharat. To the left of this group, Krishna is seen with his two favourite *gopinis*, Rukmini and Satya-bhama. The third group is of a king and queen. The king's features represent those of Pratap Malla and the three groups were possibly set up by him.

Passing through the Golden Door you enter the Nasal Chowk, the largest of the courtyards in the palace. The existing dimensions of the courtyard date from the beginning of the Shah dynasty, as it was at this time that the courtyard became the meeting-place for the nobles of all Nepal as opposed to those of the kingdom of Kantipur alone.

The name of the courtyard is derived from the deity Nasa-leswar, the dancing Siva, whose shrine is the rather insignificant white structure opposite the entrance on the eastern side. During the Malla period, the Nasal Chowk served as a royal theatre and dances and drama were rehearsed and performed there. It also became the gathering place for meetings between the king, and his people. During the Shah dynasty, the courtyard was extended to accommodate guests for the coronation rites. Previously, the Mallas had always conducted these ceremonies in the much smaller Mul Chowk.

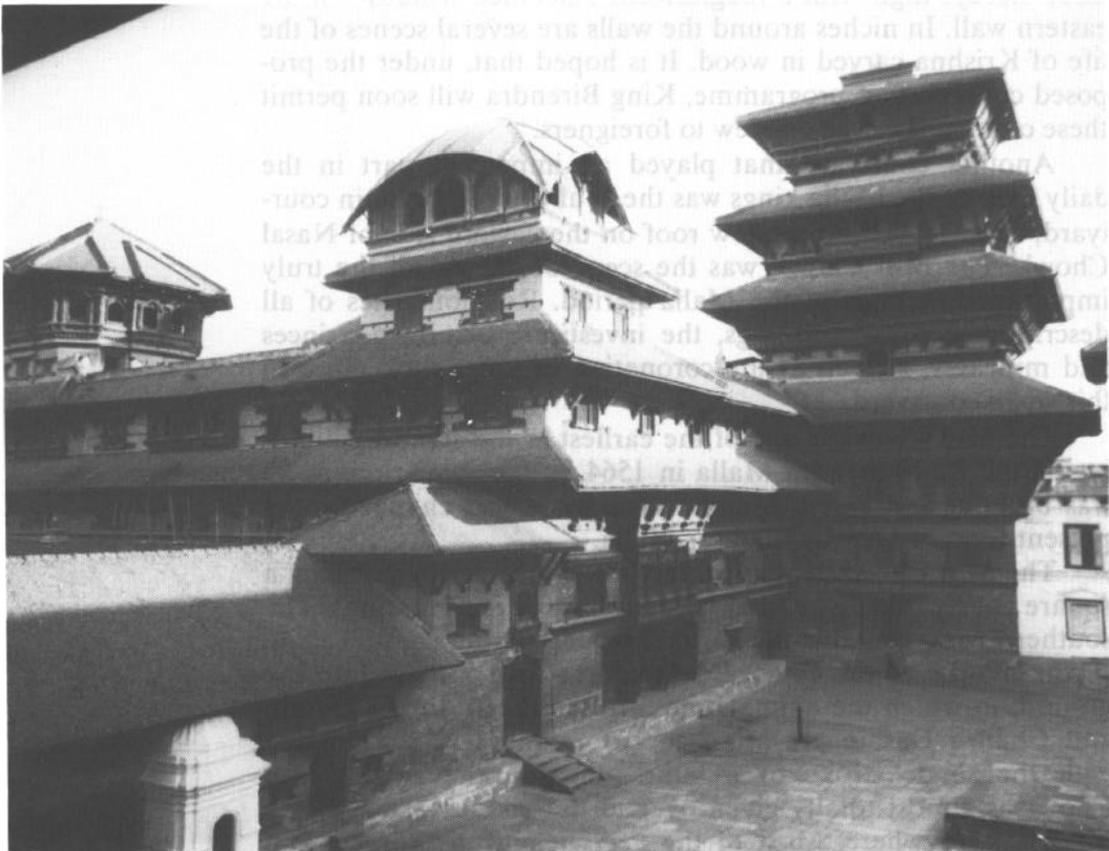
As you move into the courtyard you will be struck by the overpowering scale and variety of buildings surrounding you. Just to the left of the entrance you will find a very imposing image of Narsingh, the half-man, half-lion. This is one of the ten incarnations of Vishnu. The sculpture is of black marble decorated with silver and gold, probably imported from India. The image was erected by Pratap Malla in 1673 to appease Narasingh, whom he thought he had offended when he danced in public dressed as Narasingh. Beyond the image there is the Gaddi Baitak, the audience chamber of the Malla kings. It is a long spacious verandah-like room open to the south and it still contains the simple throne of the Mallas.

In a portico under the finely carved balcony window of the Vilas Mandir is a very fine gilded bronze image of Maha Vishnu which was rescued from debris after the 1934 earthquake. It is only recently that the upper heads of the deity have been replaced by craftsmen from Patan and the statue has been re-dedicated.

Fig. 8a.
The Hanuman
Dhoka conservation

In the centre of the courtyard there is a large low platform. Although traditions connected with this platform go back hundreds of years, its present shape dates from 1826 when much of the latest part of the palace was constructed and the courtyard was partly stone-paved. Each year, during Indrajatra, the image of Indra is brought from the Degutaleju Temple and placed on the platform, a tradition that must survive from the time of the Mallas. Recently the platform was the focal point of King Birendra's coronation ; it was here that the throne was placed as it has been for several reigns and the crowned king received the homage of his subjects.

Looking back over the Gaddi Baitak, you will notice two small towers rising out of the building. On the north-west corner is the Agam Chen which houses the traditional family shrine of the Malla kings. Entrance to the shrine has always been restricted ; to this day its sanctity remains inviolate (even though the Malla kings have long ceased to rule. Directly across the roof-top from the Agan Chen. on the north-west corner, there is a



five-tiered tower of the Panch Mukhi Hanuman, the five-faced monkey. Although there is no inscription, the temple apparently dates from the year 1655. The worship of Hanuman is offered daily according to secret rites and only priests may witness them or enter the temple. To the north of Nasal Chowk lies Mohan Chowk, the residence of the Malla kings. It was built by Pratap Malla in 1649 and later 'modernized' and repaired during the reign of King Rajendra Bikram Shah in 1822. At present foreigners are not permitted to enter this courtyard for religious and security reasons. One of the central features of the courtyard is a fine gilded water-spout, set in a beautifully carved sunken bathing area. It was here that the king performed his ritual bathing ceremonies, after which he ascended the large stone throne to complete his morning devotions. Close at hand is a globe of the world, unrecognizable today but real to Pratap Malla in his attempt to understand the world around him.

The Mohan Chowk is built in the chokwath form, a square quadrangle with towers at each corner. The building itself is three storeys high with a magnificent balconied window on the eastern wall. In niches around the walls are several scenes of the life of Krishna carved in wood. It is hoped that, under the proposed conservation programme, King Birendra will soon permit these courtyards to be on view to foreigners.

Another courtyard that played an important part in the daily lives of the Malla kings was the Mu1 Chowk, or main courtyard, situated behind the low roof on the eastern side of Xasal Chowk. The Mu1 Chowk was the scene of almost all the truly important functions of the Malla period. Religious rites of all descriptions, royal weddings, the investiture of crown princes and ministers, as well as the coronation of kings took place in this small courtyard.

The Mu1 Chowk is one of the earliest of the standing buildings. Built by Mahendra Malla in 1564, at the same time as he was building the Taleju Mandir close by, it was changed to its present form in 1709 by Bhaksar Malla.

The Mu1 Chowk is shaped very much like a vihara, being a square courtyard surrounded by double-storeyed buildings. The southern wing contains the shrine housing the image of Taleju. In the middle of the courtyard there is a low post set into the ground, to which the animals that are sacrificed during Dasain and Chaitra Dasain are attached before they are decapitated with the single stroke of a kukri-the Gurkha sword. Mu1 Chowk is almost totally given over to the goddess Taleju. Her mark is everywhere. Most of the very beautifully carved roof

struts depict scenes based on the stories of the Chandi, in which the devi is depicted in the act of destroying some demon. Below the level of the roof struts these exploits are further described in inscriptions. All the balconied windows are exceptionally fine, although much of their beauty is spoilt by paintwork. The shrine in which the Taleju devi is placed during the major festival of Dassain is richly decorated with gilded doors, windows and tympanum. Flanking the doors there are two life-size images of Ganga and Jamuna. On the roof over the shrine there is a gilded pinnacle marking the roof of the shrine and in front of this there are a further five gilded pinnacles which mark the sanctuary itself. Again, access to this chowk is restricted to members of the palace, save for one day during the Dasain festival, when Hindus alone are permitted to pay homage to Taleju. It is, however, possible to see something of the courtyard from the terrace above the Vilas Mandir.

Fig. 86.
The Mu1 Chowk,
Hanuman Dhoka.



Moving towards the south-east corner of the Nasal Chowk, you approach the part of the palace which has been recently the subject of a major conservation project run by the Nepalese Government with assistance from UNDP and Unesco in the form of expertise and funds.

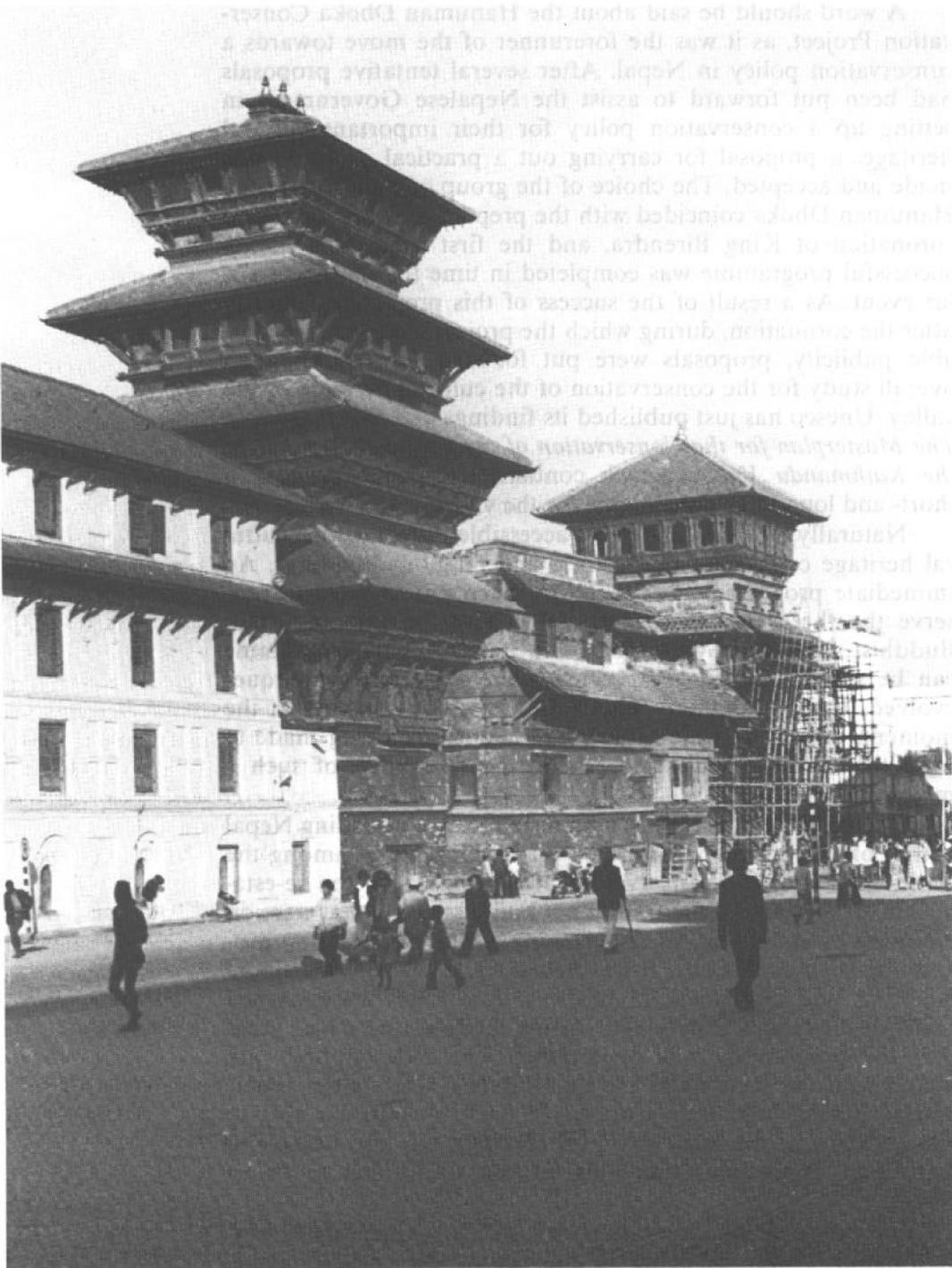
At the south-east corner of the Nasal Chowk there is an exit leading into the Lohan Chowk, a stone-paved courtyard overlooked by a three-storeyed building known as the Vilas Mandir, or Building of Luxury. At each corner of this structure sit different towers, one of them being the high Basantapur Tower overlooking the remainder of the palace buildings. This used to be the early residence of the Shah kings. They moved from the quarters formerly occupied by the Malla kings into this section of the durbar during Prithvi Narayan Shah's reign. The structure was greatly enlarged and to commemorate his conquest of the valley and the unification of Nepal, Prithvi Narayan Shah built, or more likely extended, the present Basantapur Tower to its present height.

According to the inscription over the main entrance, the Basantapur in its present form was completed on 21 March 1770 and named Basant, meaning spring, as this season was being heralded in by the festival of Basant Panchami.

The architectural history of this whole complex of buildings is a little confused. The recent repair works have indicated that the building has been added to and extended over several different periods and particular research on a comparative method has established that the lower half of the Basantapur Tower is adorned with carvings and inscriptions of a period before 1630. A second period of building can quite clearly be established: the enlarging of the palace took place under Prithvi Naryan Shah's guidance after he had established himself in this durbar. A third building period appears to have taken place under the supervision of Prithvi Narayan's son, Pratap Singh Shah, on his father's death. It was at this time that the upper floor of the Vilas Mandir and the three remaining towers were built. The towers were named after the towns that donated and built them in recognition of the unification of the valley and Nepal. There is also a theory that they replaced some earlier towers, as the names of the present towers do not tally with those recorded in the chronicles.

This group of buildings was only occupied for a hundred years by the Shah dynasty until the mid-nineteenth century. The buildings have served more as a backdrop for ceremonial occasions. When Unesco undertook the Hanuman Dhoka Conservation Project in 1972, the buildings were used as government offices and storage space for government archives.

Fig. 9.
Basantapur Tower,
Hanuman Dhoka.



A word should be said about the Hanuman Dhoka Conservation Project, as it was the forerunner of the move towards a conservation policy in Nepal. After several tentative proposals had been put forward to assist the Nepalese Government in setting up a conservation policy for their important cultural heritage, a proposal for carrying out a practical example was made and accepted. The choice of the group of buildings in the Hanuman Dhoka coincided with the preparations for the recent coronation of King Birendra, and the first stage of a highly successful programme was completed in time for this spectacular event. As a result of the success of this project and shortly after the coronation, during which the project received considerable publicity, proposals were put forward for preparing an overall study for the conservation of the cultural heritage of the valley. Unesco has just published its findings in a report entitled *The Masterplan for the Conservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Kathmandu Valley*, which contains proposals for both a short- and long-term programme for the valley.

Naturally, the first and most accessible aspect of this cultural heritage consists of the historic and religious buildings. An immediate programme has therefore been put forward to conserve the three durbar squares, as well as the two important Buddhist shrines of Swayambhu and Baudha. This programme can be started almost at once using the skills and techniques evolved in the Hanuman Dhoka Conservation Project. At the moment, efforts, of which this guide is one, are being made to raise the necessary funds to ensure the continuity of such a major undertaking.

One element of great fascination to foreigners visiting Nepal is that of the traditional building crafts. Numbered among the achievements of the conservation project has been the re-establishment of many of the traditional building crafts that were on the point of extinction. In undertaking a major restoration programme such as this one, it was necessary to rely on traditional materials **and** craftsmen. In the next few pages are recorded many of the team's experiences during the four and a half years that the programme was operational. These descriptions are linked with the sections of the building that were under repair and so during your tour around you will not only be able to witness some of the most beautiful carvings, but also be able to learn and appreciate something of the traditional crafts of Nepal.

For purposes of orientation, we will take the nine-storey Basantapur Tower as being in the south-west corner, facing

north across the Nasal Chowk. On the north-west corner is the Kirtipur Tower, often referred to as the Bangla Tower. It has a domed copper roof of distinct Bengali influence. Opposite, on the north-eastern corner, is the Bhaktapur Tower, a building of traditional construction but of octagonal-plan form. The remaining tower dominating the Juddha Sadak, or new road, is the notorious Lalitpur Tower, a solid square structure that had a severe lean as a result of the 1934 earthquake. It was only recently, during the conservation programme, that this dramatic failing was rectified. Little work has been done so far on the Vilas Mandir, consisting of the building beneath the towers, other than the necessary structural strengthening dictated by the towers above and the renovation and cleaning of the facade overlooking the Nasal Chowk, which had to be done for the coronation.

As a starting-point, let us take the imposing elevation overlooking the Nasal Chowk. It is hard now to believe that every square centimetre of it was covered in paint. Up to eight layers of paint were removed from some of the lower carved timbers. All the details in the carvings of the windows and cornices were obliterated. The brickwork with its unique glazing was hidden under layers of red distemper, the intention being no doubt to unify the facade as the upper level had been constructed in an unglazed brick of inferior quality. The magnificent double-storey window consists of well over five hundred different interlocking pieces. The detail in it is unbelievable even down to the individual horses and birds, the miniature rampant lions and the hundreds of specially turned pieces that form the lower fringe. The door leading into the Lohan Chowk is one of the largest of its kind. Again there is amazing detail : hundreds of skulls forming a border to the door frame, entwining snakes and a fine carving of Ganesh over the lintel.

It is well worth considering the exquisite carvings on the lower half of the Basantapur Tower. These undoubtedly represent some of the finest examples of wood-carving to be found throughout Nepal. The erotic carvings at the base of the struts and the inscriptions provided the information necessary to date these works of art and possibly to give sufficient evidence to date the building itself. It is worth studying the details of the windows-the birds being chased by the dogs and vice versa up the jambs of the lower windows-and to pick out the first example of a soldier armed with a gun in the sill of the lower right-hand window, or just to gaze upon the serene faces of the deity and his consort in the supporting roof struts.

Climbing through the Basantapur Tower, you will reach the terrace over the Vilas Mandir and from here it is possible to study the three towers.

The Kirtipur Tower

The repair work undertaken in this tower was among the more interesting. This small tower has a Bengali-style roof covered with copper roofing that was originally gilded. In all aspects this structure is unique in Nepal and presented many difficulties when it came to rectifying its faults. The tower was in a state of near collapse when first inspected, which was due mainly to the failure of the roofing. The copper sheeting had been nailed direct to the boarding and rain-water was able to penetrate the nail holes. On either side of the ridge of the roof, where the curve is flatter, water had crept up the overlapping joints by means of capillary attraction and caused the boarding to rot, the nails to loosen and the copper sheets to become unfixed. The general rotten condition of the timbers caused a further weakening of the structure and as a result of several earth tremors the timber joints had failed completely.

Thus, the team was faced with a structure that was insecure and in which 80 per cent of the timbers were not re-usable. In addition, this tower was a Structure in which there was not a single piece of straight timber. Once it had been decided that the tower had to be completely dismantled, it was evident that very careful records and drawings would be needed to help re-assemble it correctly. Every piece of carving was referenced and handed over to one of the carving sections. Each structural member was carefully dismantled, similarly recorded and handed over to the carpenters.

As every piece of the roof structure was curved and as many sections were completely rotten, the first work was to gather pieces that made up at least one quarter of the roof shape so that we could copy exactly and make mirror images of the other missing sections. In this way the structure was reformed and temporarily re-erected to ensure that the pieces fitted together.

Perhaps the most arduous task was the preparation of the rafters which were all curved and which all had to be replaced. Again, one quarter, consisting of twenty-five rafters, was assembled. It was particularly difficult to determine the shape of original complete rafters as most of these were damaged. The pit sawyers were persuaded to cut the timbers on a curve, some-

thing they had never done before, and in some cases it was possible to cut two rafters from one balk of timber. Thus, there could be some saving of timber.

At the same time as the carpenters were working on the repair and replacements of the structure, the carvers were repairing and replacing the damaged sections of carvings. The preparatory work took nearly nine months and about four additional months were required for the careful fitting together of all the pieces of this major jigsaw. As a protection against further decay to the timbers, each piece was dipped in a chemical bath tilled with fungicide and insecticide and left submerged there for about two hours.

The copper roof covering posed a further problem. In terms of conservation, the original roof covering should have been put back. But in this case it was considered that the original copper roofing had outlived its use. The old copper sheeting was carefully removed and used as a template for the new copper sheets so that they matched the original in outward appearance and size. The fixing was incorporated into the welted joints so as not to pierce the waterproof copper membrane.

This repair work was carried out so as to reproduce faithfully the original pieces even down to the metal fixings that were hand-forged in the original manner.

The Basantapur Tower

The Basantapur Tower, rising 30.5 metres from the ground, posed a totally different set of problems. The matter of its sheer size was the most daunting problem, especially having to scaffold it. At first the idea of bamboo, as opposed to solid tubular steel, scaffolding caused considerable concern. The work involved cutting and transporting the bamboos from the forests, erecting the many pieces and tying them together with thousands of metres of string. Despite all these difficulties and after initially training the scaffolders to tie safety knots for the lashings and to observe basic principles of safety, a team of twenty to thirty men set to work on the task. The scaffolding became the centre of speculation in Katmandu for some time, as there was little visible progress on its erection for several months. The top-most roof required major structural repair since it was damaged during the 1934 earthquake. A new structural base to the roof was inserted, replacing the old decayed and damaged timbers. The pinnacle and its base measured 4.6 metres long by

1.5 metres wide and stood 3 metres above the roof. This had to be dismantled and lowered to the ground by means of a home-made block and tackle. It was then repaired and re-erected. The roofs were totally replaced with new timbers and the traditional interlocking joints were then rationalized. Previously, they had caused inherent weaknesses in their structure. All the timbers were also treated against further beetle and fungal attack.

The Lalitpur Tower

The repair programme on the Lalitpur Tower posed some of the most interesting technical problems so far encountered. Unlike the two towers in the first stage, where the problems of repair and renovation were not clearly visible, the failings of the Lalitpur Tower were a major attraction visible from along the main street (Juddha Sadak). Its notorious lean of over 15° from vertical was caused by the 1934 earthquake. It had not collapsed because, shortly after it was damaged, some engineers, reputedly from Germany, propped the building in its leaning condition to

Fig. 10a.
Lalitpur Tower.
Hanuman Dhoka
(before repair).

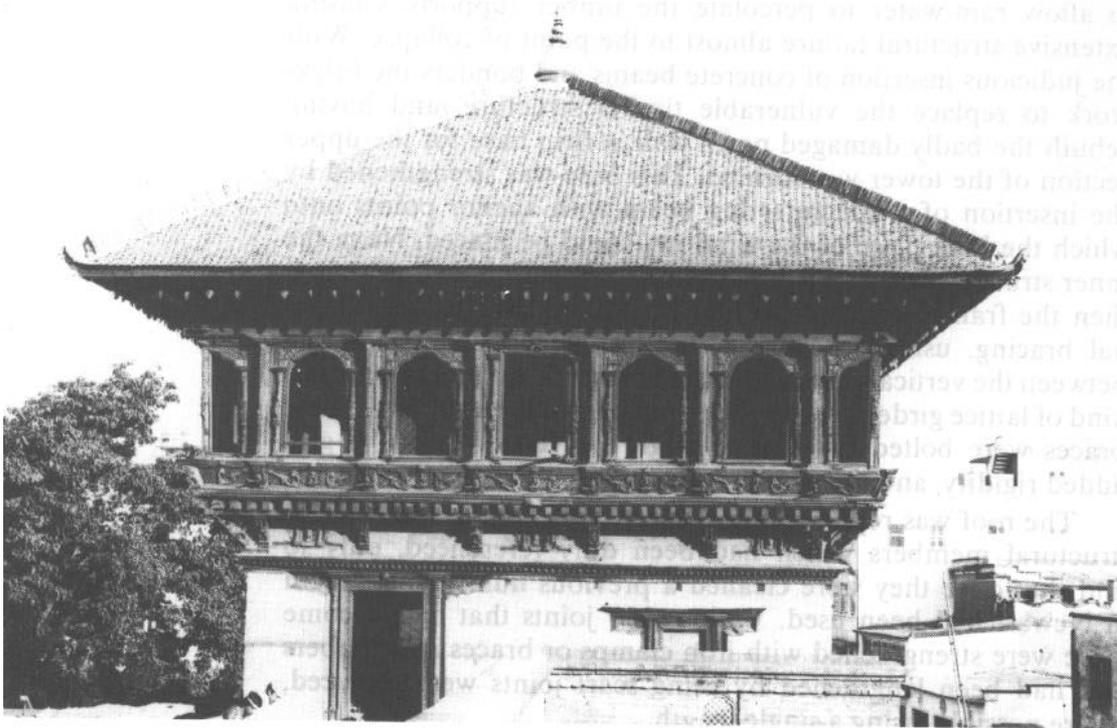


prevent it from total collapse. It survived thus for just over forty years to become a challenging subject for restoration by the conservation project office.

Initial careful examination of the structure showed that the actual breaking-point of the lean was where the solid brick walling ended and the flexible timber framework took over. This framework, consisting of an unbraced post and lintel structure supporting a very heavy roof, was also supporting externally complete façades of carved windows. The reason for failure was, first, that the structure lacked any diagonal bracing but, due to its high flexibility, all the failure was at the joints. Apart from a few warped or twisted members, almost all the structural and decoratively carved timbers were re-usable. The roof, being a hipped structure, well designed and built but of very heavy construction, was responsible for the sideways movement. In fact, it slid across and the eaves were still parallel with the floor after the earthquake and the tiles remained on the roof.

Because of the structure's flexibility and the excellent condition of the roof it was hoped, originally, to lighten the roof structure by taking off some of the easily removable carved work and

Fig. 10b.
Lalitpur Tower,
Hanuman Dhoka
(after repair).



physically jacking the building back into an upright position as a demonstration of the many possibilities in the field of building repair. It was soon discovered, during preliminary investigations, that much of the structure supporting even the brickwork to the tower was in a very dangerous state. Also much of the carved woodwork on the south elevation was badly weathered, due to its excessive exposure to the elements. It was necessary, therefore, to dismantle carefully the building following the technique so well tested and proven in the first stage. All the carved windows, cornices, etc. were referenced, dismantled and sent for repair to the carving section, and it was soon discovered that, because of the redistribution of the loads as a result of the damage done by the earthquake, many of the timbers were badly damaged and would require very careful refitting. It was therefore decided to rebuild each individual façade in the carvers' studios off a level base and to iron out any of the major faults before rebuilding the tower. In this way, much valuable time was saved as the re-erection of the timber structure was able to proceed with the minimum of interruption once the structural base had been repaired.

Due to the considerable movement caused by the earthquake, the structure beneath the tower had opened up enough to allow rain-water to percolate the timber supports, causing extensive structural failure almost to the point of collapse. With the judicious insertion of concrete beams and bonders the brickwork to replace the vulnerable timber structure, and having rebuilt the badly damaged north wall, a firm base for the upper section of the tower was formed. This base was strengthened by the insertion of a concrete ring beam with anchor points onto which the base plate of the windows could be placed. Next, the inner structure was erected, both level and plumb, and to strengthen the framework and prevent the lateral weaknesses, diagonal bracing, using specially tailored angle irons, was inserted between the vertical posts and fixed horizontal members to form a kind of lattice girder around the upper part of the structure. These braces were bolted together through the vertical posts to give added rigidity, and the whole structure was hidden in brickwork.

The roof was replaced using over 90 per cent of the original structural members which had been duly referenced, only to find that once they were cleaned a previous numbering system in Newari had been used. Various key joints that had become loose were strengthened with iron clamps or braces and timbers that had been lengthened by using scarf joints were replaced, where possible, using a single length.

The standard repair work, cleaning and conservation techniques which were tested and proved to be both a successful and a viable proposition in the first stage were used again to complete the work on this tower and the final result is a fine tribute to the craftsmen that worked on its renovation.

The Bhaktapur Tower

Unlike the other three towers which were in a very poor condition, the Bhaktapur Tower had withstood most of the devastations that had affected the others. In fact, the work that was carried out was basic maintenance. It was originally intended to carry out the cleaning of the roof members and the carvings *in situ*, but as by now the team of carpenters had perfected the technique of dismantling and re-assembling complicated structures and the cleaning of the long roof members was very much easier when dismantled, the rafters and internal supports were taken down, giving easier access to the carved windows which were cleaned *in situ*.

Owing to the nature of the structural plan of the tower—a square with the corners cut off to form an octagon at the point where the timber framework supersedes the brickwork—it was able to withstand major failure as a result of the earthquake. The roof, its covering, and the carved windows, remained intact with only very local disturbance. The work carried out, therefore, was of a general nature, consisting of re-roofing to incorporate the new techniques evolved in the first stage and the cleaning and treatment of the woodwork to both the carved windows and the roof structure. The complex roof pattern was a real challenge to the traditional roof tilers and no doubt their skills have gone a long way to enhance this very decorative and unusual tower.

Perhaps the best place to survey the celebrated Taleju Mandir is from atop the towers of the Vilas Mandir. This very impressive structure, built in 1564 by Mahendra Malla, is the most splendid and most famous of the three Taleju Mandirs built by the Mallas in the valley. The worship of Taleju devi came to the Katmandu Valley with refugees from the Terai and the god became the tutelary deity of the Malla kings at the time of Jayastithi Malla's assumption of power. When the valley was divided into several kingdoms after 1428, the various branches of the Malla family built their own shrines to Taleju near their palaces. This Taleju Mandir is in the Trisul Chowk and can be

Fig. II.
Taleju Temple,
Hanuman Dhoka.

reached by the Singh Dhoka. The temple is over 37 metres high, resting on a twelve-stage plinth, and has three gilded roofs. It used to be the highest structure in Katmandu ; tradition had it that it was inauspicious to build higher. Sadly, this simple rule is no longer adhered to, as modern high-rise buildings mar the roofscapes.

The temple in itself is of impressive size and everything about it—the doors, windows and supporting roof struts—is of similar proportions. The south-facing door and the torana are gilded and the windows elsewhere are all heavily carved. The imagery throughout is indicative of the Shakta cult. Everything about the temple seems to emphasize its ritual remoteness. The roofs of all three stages are of gilded copper and edged with rows of wind-bells. The corners of the two lower roofs are decorated with embossed banners, while the upper roof has specially

Fig. 12.
Map of Durbar
Square, Katmandu.



designed pots hanging from each corner and is capped with a very beautiful set of pinnacles. It is undoubtedly one of the finest buildings in the traditional style, beautifully proportioned, and in a wonderful setting, perhaps the most dramatic and yet pleasing structures in the valley.

Leaving the marvels of the art and architecture behind we will now take a closer look around the durbar square. The large temple opposite the Hanuman gate is the Jagannath which was originally built by Mahendra Malla in 1563. In the inner recess of the shrine there is an important image of the Chaturmurti Vishnu with an inscription bearing the above date. This inscription is in Sanskrit and is the earliest yet found in the Hanuman Dhoka. The Jagannath rests on a three-tiered platform and has a two-tiered roof supported by some very elaborately carved roof struts famed for their erotic carvings. Like those of the Hanuman Dhoka, these show a tantric influence. Unusually, each of the four elevations contains groups of three doors that are of excellent quality. The central door in each case carries the signs of Mahadev : three eyes and a trident, and on each of the other doors are the symbols of the Shakta cult to represent the goddess : three indentations above a decorative pot. The temple has an inner sanctuary into which only the priests may go.

Above the roofs of the palace buildings on the left-hand side of the golden door, there is the magnificent temple of Degutaleju which appears to grow out of the lower structure. It was built by Shiva Singh Malla in the late sixteenth century and later added to by the Shah kings. The temple is about 28 metres high, slightly shorter than the Taleju Mandir, and is a different manifestation of the Shakta cult. Again, this is a special royal temple and it can only be reached through the living quarters of the palace onto a terrace. The temple rises above this terrace with a three-tiered roof, richly ornamented. The north-facing door is panelled in silver, the gift of King Girbana Yuddha Bikram Shah in 1815. The top roof is capped with a very fine pinnacle.

Set high on a pillar opposite the Degutaleju is a statue of King Pratap Malla, the founder of much of the art and architecture that surrounds him. He is accompanied by his four sons and two of his wives. This is an exquisite piece of metalwork and the first of its kind depicting the king in an attitude of praise before his favourite temple.

Almost beneath the Degutaleju there is the large golden mask of Sweta Bhairab, fierce in appearance and standing at least 4 metres high. It is normally screened from public view, but is opened during Indrajaatra in September when the local beer

pours from its mouth to be gulped down by an excited crowd. The image was erected by Rana Bahadur Shah in 1796 to drive off evil spirits and ghosts.

Mention should be made of the great drums across the road, which were installed at the beginning of the nineteenth century and are beaten during the worship of the Degutaleju. About the same time, the great bell was erected by King Rana Bahadur Shah to drive off evil spirits.

Adjacent to the great drums there is an unusual octagonal temple dedicated to Krishna and built by Pratap Malla in 1637. When Siddhi Narasingh was dedicating the famous Krishna Temple of Patan, Pratap Malla, who was only a prince, attacked the city.

His efforts were largely futile but he received a great deal of criticism, and in order to gain some of his lost prestige he built this temple in memory of his two queens. Again, a Sanskrit inscription tells us that the features on the images in the shrine resemble those of Pratap and his queens. The construction of the temple is slightly more complicated owing to its shape, but the three-tiered roof structure is supported by some well-carved roof struts.

Here we must leave the section of the durbar adjacent to the Hanuman Dhoka and move into the main part of the square where there is a further profusion of temples. As you walk up the short street that joins the two open spaces, the buildings on the right are, in fact, the west wing of one of the original Malla courtyards. It is known as the Masan Chowk, which translated literally means the cremation courtyard. An interesting theory suggests that this building group actually represents today the north-westernmost corner of old Katmandu, as it was common for such a courtyard to be placed on the outer extremities of the palace complex and to be thus orientated. Recently this building, which had been used as a shopping arcade and condemned as structurally unsound, was the subject of an interesting piece of building conservation. The original structure had been badly damaged by the 1934 earthquake and you can see today the effect of this damage in the leaning and bulging walls. The members of the Hanuman Dhoka Conservation Project Office who were called in to advise on the structure felt that this building was such an important feature in the streetscape with its leans and bulges-in fact, graphically telling the story of its past history-that it should be consolidated in its existing state. This was cleverly done by consolidating the structure with reinforced concrete columns and beams inserted in the thickness of the

walls and floors. The building was carefully cleaned of its stucco finish to reveal the beautiful glazed brickwork. The special window on the corner, where the king is said to have sat watching his subjects, is an unusual and particularly fine example of traditional craftsmanship. Not only does it demonstrate fine wood-carving but also some beautiful gilded metalwork and, if you look closely, you will see carvings in ivory and bone as well. The building now stands as an important focal point in the durbar square streetscape and maintains its characteristic old age.

As one enters the second square on the right, there is another unusual temple dedicated to Siva and Parvati. It stands on what was probably a dance platform long before the temple was built in the late eighteenth century. This rectangular temple is unusual in form as, although it conforms in principle to the typical building style, its detail and construction are very different. It is likely that it was made up of various bits of an older building. The carvings are of an earlier period and the eastern windows of stone are unique. Overlooking the platform in the upper window of the temple are the images of Siva and his consort, Parvati, who have always captured the imagination of the local people because of their poses and expressions which are so life-like.

The most imposing temple in the square is the dominating Maju Deval shrine. Set in the centre of the square, it was built in 1690 by Riddhi Laxmi and is dedicated to Siva. It is worth climbing the base of the temple for the overall view of the durbar square.

The next largest temple in the courtyard is the Trailokya Mohan Mandir, which was built by Parthibendra Malla in 1480. It is often referred to as the Das Avatar Dekaune Mandir, as it is here, during the festival of Indraajatra, that dances depicting the ten incarnations of Vishnu are performed. The temple is dedicated to Vishnu, and his vehicle Garuda can be found on the eastern side carved out of stone. This is one of the best examples of the Garuda to be found in the valley. It was erected by Riddhi Laxmi nine years after the completion of the temple.

Adjacent to this temple is a three-storey building with a white stuccoed façade and some beautifully carved windows. It is in the form of a *bahal* and is the dwelling of the Kumari, the living goddess, who is a young virgin of the Shakya caste considered to be an incarnation of Taleju. The religious institution was founded by Jaya Prakash Malla in the mid-eighteenth century and the construction of the *bahal* dates from the same

Fig. 13.
Kāsthmandap-

Marutol.

period. The Kumari plays an important role during most of the Taleju festivals, but the most spectacular is that of Indraajatra, when she rides in a chariot around the city. The worship of Kumari is of strong Newari Buddhist influence, although many Hindus, including the royal family, pay their respects to her at the major festivals.

The Kumari Ghar, as it is often called, has important socio-religious significance. It is built in the style of a Buddhist *bahal* and there is a shrine to Buddha in the courtyard. The inner façades, like the main one, contain beautiful carved windows, doors and roof struts. The inner balcony windows are especially fine and it is here that the Kumari appears from time to time in the company of her guardians to see and be seen by her admirers.

Continuing south-west towards the diagonal route from Maru Tol, where the square narrows, there is a small building that has more the appearance of a rest-house than a temple, although it is dedicated to Narayan. It is a very important building containing a wealth of interesting carvings. Its foundation date is unknown, but it appears to date from the sixteenth century. Today it has lost both its original function as well as its name. It was originally a *sattal* but later became a temple dedicated to Maxmi Narayan, when the addition on the north elevation was made. Today it serves as a money-changer's stall but it is hoped that, under the new durbar square conservation programme, it will be restored to its original form and function.

Before moving on to the majestic buildings of Maru Tol, a word about the small shrine, the Ashok Binayak, commonly called the Maru Ganesh, which is located in a corner adjacent to the Kasthamandap. Its size belies its importance, for the popularity of this shrine in the Katmandu Valley is great. It is one of four main shrines dedicated to Ganesh. It is common practice to venerate the Ganesh prior to carrying out other worship. The Katmandu Ganesh is worshipped by the royal family, especially by the king, during the coronation ceremonies, and by both Hindus and Buddhists throughout the valley. The entire surface of this shrine is gilded and, although there is no inscription, it is assumed to be fairly old. However, the present roof was put on by King Surendra in 1847.

The third area of this extended durbar square, known as Maru Tol, is dominated by the Kasthamandap. This is not only the largest building of its style in the valley but also the oldest. The history of this site dates back to the eleventh century and many of the surviving timbers are thought to be of this period.

Since the sixteenth century it has been known as the Maru Sattal.

Legend has it that the timber used in the construction of the Kasthamandap came from a single tree which is said to have provided timber for the adjacent Singha Sattal as well. The name 'Kasthamandap' translated literally means 'the wooden pavilion' and it is also the derivation of the name Katmandu. The date of its construction is a little uncertain as the word used in the inscriptions for building and renewing is the same. Throughout its history there have been many changes and alterations to the Kasthamandap ; nevertheless, it is still remarkably like the descriptions of Nepalese architecture given in the Chinese travel books about Nepal in the seventh century.

The building consists of three large open halls set one above the other with a full balcony with low railings, which surely underlines its original use. Today, there is a shrine dedicated to Goraknath, but previously it was used by sadhus, who carried out the tantric rites of the Chakra Puja here. The building has been recently restored to its present form and cleared of traders who had taken it over. Historically, it is perhaps the most important building in Katmandu and it still retains its elegance and proportions, although like so many other buildings it has lost its original function. The other two important buildings in Maru To1 are the Kabindrapur, a four-storeyed building with three tiers of roofs, and the Singha Sattal, so named after the leaping lions or griffons on the corners of the building.

Kabindrapur, or Dhansa as it is sometimes referred to, is of rather special form. It is difficult to recognize as a temple as the lower part of it is occupied by a large fruit store. It was constructed by Pratap Malla in 1673 and dedicated to Narasingh as another form of appeasement for publicly miming him. Pratap was a great patron of the arts, and he thought himself to be a literary person, well versed in song and dance ; he adopted the name of Kabindra-master poet-hence the temple's name.

Singha Sattal, or Silyan, is a large house with shops below. The upper level is now used as a gathering place for the singing of *bhajans*. Inside, there is an image of Garud Narayan, which was uncovered during excavations for a new house nearby in 1863. The bronze lions, however, were only put in place about fifty years ago and are no doubt the source of the building's present name.

Places to discover in Katmandu

The following buildings or areas, excluding the durbar square and its immediate vicinity, can all be discovered on foot and are within a maximum of half an hour's walk from the durbar square. Most of the buildings of interest are located on, or close to, the Bhimsenthan to Asan To1 diagonal trade route, running between Bhimsenthan, through Maru Tol, the durbar square, to Indra Chowk, Asan and Bhotahiti.

To the west of Maru To1 and the durbar square there are a few buildings of great interest that can be easily located. At almost the western extremity of the diagonal road is the Bhimsen temple. As a protector and promoter of trades and crafts, Bhimsen became a popular god among the Newari in the seventeenth century. The temple was built in the mid-seventeenth century and has no doubt undergone alterations and additions since then. It is of unusual form in that it is a two-storey temple with the main sanctuary on the upper floor and a row of shops below. The building is capped with two diminishing gilded metal roofs which are set over a lower tiled roof. The shrine is not accessible to foreign visitors but it is interesting to see the many devotees paying homage each morning. Formerly, the statue of Bhimsen was taken in procession every twelve years all the way to Lhasa in Tibet.

To the south-east of Bhimsenthan at Jaisideval is a largish temple of the late seventeenth century. Its location is said to have been the centre of Katmandu during the Licchavi period as on the eastern side of the temple there is an early Licchavi inscription. Returning along the road, passing through the Maru To1 containing the Kasthamandap and its associated buildings and through the durbar square, you pass through Makhan To1

with its gold markets into a road flanked by attractive arcaded buildings where materials are sold. These buildings were modified in the late nineteenth century. At this point it is worth while looking back towards the durbar square to see the splendidly located Taleju Temple—a building of magnificent proportions dominating the typical streetscape of Katmandu.

This narrow and bustling street leads to a busy forecourt known as Indra Chowk, in front of the rather garish shrine of Akash Bhairab. Again, this temple follows the unusual form of an upper sanctuary like that of Bhimsen, with shops below. The date of its construction is uncertain, but it does play an important part in many of the religious festivals, especially the festival of Indrajatra, when the large mask of Bhairab is displayed in front of the temple, bedecked with flowers. It is sometimes possible to enter the upper sanctuary to enjoy the bhajan or musical gatherings that take place in the evening.

Continuing along the main street, passing two temples on your left, you enter once again the narrow street of Asan, which is lined with traditional terraced dwellings with their shops and stores at ground level. The only warning you will get of the next important group of buildings will be a pair of pillars supporting griffons which are protecting the entrance to the Seto Machhendhra. Entering through a narrow doorway, past a bhujan room on the right where music is played and sung nightly, you reach a courtyard of considerable proportions in the centre of which is a very splendid temple with a two-tiered roof. This is a Buddhist shrine and one of the few monastic courtyards to have such a temple. The temple was built before the beginning of the seventeenth century but underwent renovations and alterations in the mid-seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.

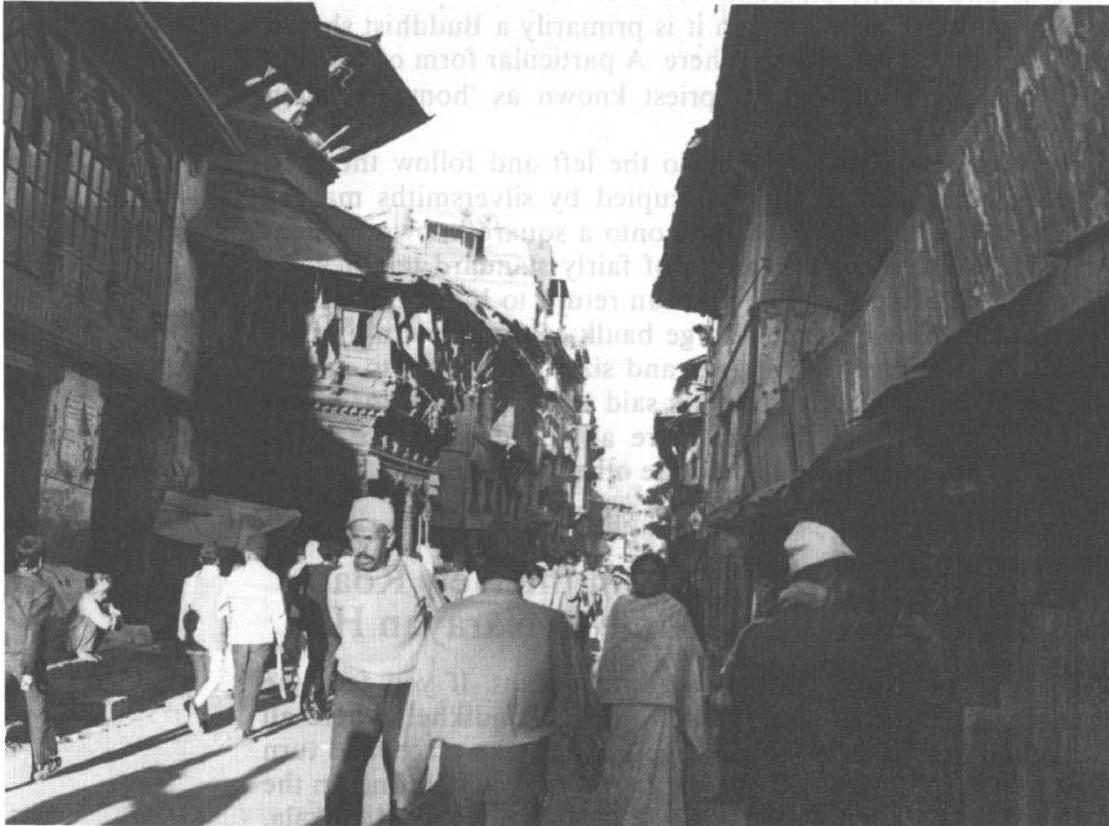
It is highly ornamental with gilt copper roofs and a profusion of metal banners, prayer wheels and other decorations. The top roof is capped with an ornate pinnacle. The supporting roof struts at the lower level, clad in gilded metal, illustrate the diverse forms of the Avalokitesvara. The surrounding courtyard of paved stone is large and spacious, and has numerous small chaityas and stone pillars supporting Buddhist deities. There is also an interesting female figure of distinct European flavour supporting a lamp that must have come from one of the Rana palaces. The enshrined deity is Padmapanti Avalokitesvara, the most compassionate divinity in the valley, white in colour and commonly known as Janmadye or Machhendranath. He is the chief deity of the Matysandranath festival in Katmandu which takes place in March. (See page 31.) Around the temple, the

daily life mingling with the constant stream of worshippers is very typical of the Nepalese way of life. Added to this, you may be fortunate enough to witness a family gathering or local festival taking place. A small opening diagonally opposite the entrance leads to a pottery market, where pots of all shapes and sizes are brought from around the valley to be sold.

Moving through to the main road, you turn right through an interesting collection of shops where cotton mattresses are made and you will find yourself back on the diagonal road alongside a small temple with the strange name of Lunchun Lun Bun Ajima. The first thing you will notice is that the temple sanctuary is below the level of the existing road. Over the years the road has been resurfaced one layer atop the other until only recently a tarmac surface was laid. As a result, the level and indeed the water-table have risen as much as a foot above the original. This temple has beautiful proportions despite the unpleasant white tiles that have been added to the facade.

Continuing along the street towards Asan, you will find a very fine octagonal temple sandwiched between two residential

Fig. 14.
Asan Tol-Tiland
Ghark Krishna
Temple.



buildings and projecting into the road. The shrine is dedicated to Krishna and it is one of very few remaining polygonal temples. It has carvings of remarkable quality arcaded at ground-floor level, with fine pillars that support a series of exquisitely carved windows above. Directly adjacent to this temple on its left there is a historically important residence of the early nineteenth century known as Tilang Ghar. It is famous as the first house in Katmandu outside the palace to be permitted to use glass windows. Between the two floors on the facade, there is a stucco frieze depicting marching soldiers carrying guns. It is said to be a copy of a similar frieze on one of King Prithvinarayan Shah's fortifications at Nawakot in Trisuli.

Further along, the street broadens into the small square known as Asan, where there are three small temples. The most interesting is the Annapurna Temple, hidden behind mounds of rice sold on its forecourt. This temple, which was possibly constructed in the early nineteenth century, belongs to a Buddhist tantric sect and the object of worship in the sanctuary is not an image of a deity but a pot known as a '*burnakalasha*', *Mere*. symbols and mystic diagrams are used in worship rather than iconographic forms. Although it is primarily a Buddhist shrine, many non-Buddhists worship here. A particular form of worship performed by a Bajacharya priest known as 'homa' is often performed.

If you now take a turning to the left and follow the road between several small shops occupied by silversmiths making jewellery, it will eventually open onto a square known as Bangemuda, where there is a group of fairly standard temples. By taking the left-hand turning you can return to Indra Chowk. At this corner you will notice a large baulk of timber with literally thousands of nails of all shapes and sizes knocked into it. The placing of a nail in this timber is said to be the cure for toothache ! It is also the quarter where all the dentists are to be found, no doubt on hand should the other cure fail.

From the New Road Gate to Narayan Hiti

Take the New Road Gate as a starting-point. If you face the large open parade ground, known as the Tundikhel, where all the military parades and massed gatherings take place, and turn right past the military and general hospitals, you will find on the right-hand side a temple on a raised level, known as Mahakala.

Formerly this location could have been a *bahal*, hence the small shrines on the opposite side of the road. This is a Buddhist temple housing one of the Buddhist tutelary divinities which usually stand guard at the entrance to Buddhist viharas. Mahakala is regarded as the protector of the land and legend says that while he was passing through the heavens, the famous tantric preceptor, Manjubajra, bound him with mantras and enshrined him in this temple, which is one of the most worshipped in the valley. People flock to it every morning on their way to work.

Following along the road you will reach Rani Pokhari, an extensive pond in the middle of which is a domed temple set on an island. This temple and pond were built in 1670 by Pratap Malla to console his wife on the death of their son, Chakrabartindrais, and they are dedicated to Siva. The present temple replaces an earlier one damaged during the earthquake in 1934, which was also a replacement of the original. Although no one is permitted to enter the enclosure, it is possible to see some of the rather interesting statues and decorative elements that surround the pond such as the magnificent stone elephants.

At the north-western corner of the pond, continue along the road towards the new royal palace. Turning to the left beside the Nook Hotel, continue along this road until you meet a large building on your left that is guarded by a large pair of ferocious stone lions set on either side of an entrance. This is Chhusya Bahal, one of the oldest buildings of its kind still standing intact in the valley. It closely follows the description given of a typical *bahal* but especial note should be made of the very fine carving.

The *bahal* was completed on 13 March 1649, and on the same day the stone statue of Harihara Lokeshvara was installed in the shrine. The building, according to records, was inaugurated by King Pratap Malla only in 1667. It is said that many of the roof struts are of the fifteenth century and they are of particularly fine quality, representing Pancharaksa and Pujadebi. Beneath these figures are carvings of the Nakshatras with inscribed illustrations. The beautifully carved torana over the entrance, dated 1673, illustrates the theme of Buddha's penance. Unfortunately, this important building has been sadly neglected; it is hoped that under the valley conservation programme funds will be found to restore it.

Near by, a short way along the road, is Musya Bahal, similar to Chhusya and constructed in 1663. The fading frescoes around the inner walls depict the Buddha and add to the monastic atmosphere. Again, the roof struts are beautifully carved. Its condition is slightly better than that of Chhusya.

By either retracing one's steps or by wending a path through Thamel, you should now make for Narayan Hiti, adjacent to the new royal palace. Beyond the main entrance to the palace and close to one of the entrances to the earlier palace, a flight of steps leads to the Narayan Mandir, which was built in 1793. This shikhara-style temple is set in a large and peaceful courtyard full of interesting small shrines. Close to the entrance of this temple, but on the other side of the road, is the water conduit which gave the palace its name. Two of the flanking spouts resemble the heads of crocodiles with unusual grimaces on their faces. It is said that they witnessed the patricide of a certain King Dharmadeba who tricked his son into killing him in order to bring back the supply of water, which had unaccountably dried up.

Before reaching the Annapurna Hotel on the right-hand side, there are the remains of a large Rana Palace, the Fohara Durbar, which is all that is left of a vast complex of palace buildings of a variety of European styles that was said to have stretched over a kilometre including La1 Durbar. The palace boasted magnificent gardens and fountains as well as elaborate interiors panelled with mirrors and decorated with crystal chandeliers. This structure attempts to hold itself proudly in memory of its splendid past, but its future is far from assured.

The temples along the Bagmati River

For the next walk of discovery, it will be necessary to find some method of conveyance to the Patan bridge, close to the Blue Star Hotel. This walk will take you along the shores of the holy Bagmati River: the area known as the 'Ghats' or the place where Hindus cremate their dead. This area is used less extensively now and should there be a cremation it will be at the further end of the Ghats at the confluence of the Vishnumati with the Bagmati.

The first temple you reach is the Hem Narayan, a building of obvious Mogul influence. It is a domed, stuccoed building built on the instructions of Jung Bahadur Rana, the first Rana prime minister. There is a very fine statue of him set on a stone pillar opposite the entrance to the shrine.

The next large traditional temple you reach along the river bank is the triple-roofed Tripura Sundari, which was built in 1818 at the request of Queen Tripurasundari, the wife of Rana Bahadur Shah, to increase her own religious merit. The temple stands on a broad pedestal with small temples at each corner

containing members of the Panchayana deities. The supporting roof struts illustrate the figures in the Mahabharata epic. Along the Ghats as far as Pachali there is an assortment of temples of differing sizes. One unusual group consists of three shikharas grouped over a single sanctum ; this was probably built during the late nineteenth century.

At the end of the river bank is a further cluster of differing shikharas and temples, together with the cremation platforms. Although little research has been carried out in this area, it is believed that several of the temples are of early foundation and an early chaitya, possibly of the Licchavi period, has been located.

Some of the Rana palaces

The Singha Durbar, an enormous palace, considered to be one of the largest private dwellings of its kind, originally consisted of seven courtyards and over one thousand rooms. Alas, it was severely damaged by fire recently and all that remains is the magnificent front elevation. Its construction was the dream of Chandra Shumsher Rana, the prime minister of the day, who wanted to incorporate all his personal and official needs in one enormous edifice, which eventually seemed like a small city. He achieved the construction with the guidance of the engineers. Kumar and Kishor Narshing, and thousands of workers in under two years. A wide driveway leads through formal gardens up to the main entrance portico, which fortunately still exists. The elevation is decorated with an odd style of Corinthian column supporting a meagre pediment. The most impressive element is its size and the fact that it was built only seventy-five years ago within two years.

Along with several other palaces, such as Babar Mahal, built in 1913 by Chandra Shumsher and said to be based on Buckingham Palace in London, and Singha Mahal (1919) the Singha Durbar was built on the eastern side of Katmandu. The latter is close to the new road leading out to the airport.

To complete a short tour of the Rana palaces it is worth looking at one of the earliest palace estates to be established. This is the Hari Bhawan, now the offices of the Indian mission, which is located close to the sports stadium. It was built by Prime Minister Bhimsen Thapa in 1805, and was originally known as Bagh Durbar because live tigers were caged at its entrance. It acquired its present name when, in 1940, it was occupied and renovated by Hari Shumsher.

Environs of Katmandu

Swayambhu

Swayambhu, the Buddhist shrine set on a hillock to the west of Katmandu, is ostensibly the oldest settlement in the Katmandu Valley. There are two ways of reaching it: either along the pilgrims' route, across the river from Katmandu and up the narrow and steep stairway on the eastern side of the hillock, or by a road, recently constructed, which arrives at a point on the saddle of the hill beneath the shrine and only a short distance from it. The walk from the centre of Katmandu takes about half an hour.

The founding of Swayambhu is wrapped in legend. It is said that the Katmandu Valley was formerly a lake upon which no lotus grew. Vipssaya Buddha, many aeons ago, threw a root of the lotus onto the lake and then repeated charms over it, saying, 'When this lotus shall flower, Swayambhu, or the Self-Existent One, shall be revealed as a flame'. Much later, Visvabhu Buddha prophesied the prosperity of the valley as soon as a Boddhisatva should cause the land to appear above the waters. It was then that Manjusri, assuming the form of Visvakarma, struck an enclosing hill to the south of the valley and drained it by way of the Bagmati River, through what today is known as Chobar Gorge. Swayambhu thus came into being and a shrine was built on the hill to protect the lotus.

Though much altered, the Swayambhu stupa today overlooks the valley, surrounded by several smaller shrines and temples. There is also a Tibetan monastery, which was established in its present form in the 1950s though it is said to have been founded much earlier.

Fig. 15.
Swayambhu-
general view.

The dome of the stupa is of the same low flat type characteristic of the others to be found in the valley, and it stands upon a large platform, constructed presumably by levelling off the top of the hill, which falls away steeply on all sides. The eastern approach road is guarded towards its summit by pairs of animals-garudas, peacocks, horses, elephants and lions-all being the vehicles of the five Buddhas. At the top of the stairway, there is an enormous vajra or thunderbolt, 1.5 metres long, a symbol of sacred power, resting upon a mandala, around the drum of which are cut the symbols of the Tibetan calendar. The eyes of supreme Buddhahood peer down from the base of the pinnacle over the dome and above towers the great gilded pinnacle with its thirteen rings and crowning parasol.

Around the main shrine, gilt figures, dedicated to the five divine Buddhas, are set in iron-curtained shrines. In a recess beneath each figure is the beast or bird sacred to the Buddha. Very close to the stupa there is an important shrine, the Harati Ajima, a two-tiered temple of Hindu influence containing an image of Bhagbati. The temple is clad almost entirely in gilded copper with very fine detailing. According to local people, the main deity in this temple protects children from disease, especially smallpox, and it is therefore common for mothers to bring their new-born babies here for immunization.

Flanking the steps are two imposing shikhara-style shrines. The one to the north was built by Pratap Malla in 1654 and the one to the south at the same time by Ananta Priyadevi, one of his queens. Around and about the platform to the stupa, there are several hundred small chaityas and votive offerings among which are some early Lichhavi relics. Set into a recently constructed brick surround, there is one of the finest stone statues of the standing Buddha. It is considered one of the oldest statues of its kind in Nepal and dates from the ninth or tenth century. Taking the northern route down from the stupa you will pass another impressive seated Buddha from the same period. Opposite there is an uninspiring single-storeyed building known as Shantipur. In contrast to its appearance, the history of this building is intriguing. It is said that a certain Gunkamdeva displeased the gods by committing incest and so they caused a drought and famine. To appease the gods, the nine nags were brought under the control of Gunkamdeva with the help of Shantikar, who was living in the temple and from whom the temple derives its name. The nags worshipped him and each gave him a likeness of himself drawn with his own blood, declaring that whenever there was a drought plentiful rain would

fall as soon as these pictures were worshipped. Even today, in cases of severe drought the king will, as a final resort, visit this shrine to pray for rain.

On the western banks of the Swayambhu hill there are several other shrines, including a small chaitya sacred to Manjusri, who is identified with his partner Saraswati. They are worshipped by both Hindus and Buddhists, making it one of the main national shrines of Nepal.

The siting of Swayambhu is magnificent. There are wonderful views over Katmandu as well as the valley and, on a clear day, the sunset over the hills and the snow peaks in the distance is indescribably beautiful.

The following collection of sites is to the east of Katmandu and all are within a short taxi ride of one another. For those using a bicycle, there are short cuts through the back streets, but you will need a good map to find your way.

Pashupatinath and Gujeswari

These constitute the largest temple group in the valley, covering an extended area on both sides of the Bagmati River. The shrine of Pashupatinath is one of the holiest Hindu shrines to be found not only in the valley but also in Nepal. Set on the banks of the Bagmati River, one of the major uses of this religious centre is as a place where the souls of dying people can be released by laying them with their feet in the river ; after death their mortal remains can be cremated on the river bank.

Pashupatinath is also the scene of several colourful festivals that take place throughout the year as well as a place for constant individual worship. Despite the continuous activity on the river banks and around the temple there is always a sense of peace and tranquillity here.

The present temple, dedicated to Siva Pashupati, Lord of the Animals, dates from 1696, but its history goes back to the beginning of the fifteenth century. The present temple was constructed by Birpalendra Malla after the former structure had been severely damaged by termites.

Throughout its important history there have been so many additions and refurbishings that it is now difficult to tell how much of the original structure survives. The roofs and the pediments over the main doors are of gilded copper. The doors

themselves are of repoussé silverwork of very fine quality. The main entrance to the shrine, along the road from the west, is marked by a giant golden bull. The inner sanctum contains several fine images and shrines given by important and wealthy worshippers. Along the west bank of the Bagmati there is an amazing collection of stone sculptures, some of them dating from the fifth century, as well as a collection of small shrines. Many of the sculptures and shrines are of Buddhist origin. Set back from the river on the west side there is a variety of courtyard buildings which house the poor.

Crossing the river by the upstream bridge you can see the two large cremation platforms directly beneath the main temple, used only by the royal family and prime ministers. On the opposite bank are other votive shrines and another complex of courtyards, where pilgrims lodge during the big festivals. Continuing up this long flight of stone paved stairs you come to a peaceful area known as Gujeswari, set in a wooded glade. The main temple on the upper temple is a shikhara, dedicated to Goraknath. The shikhara was built in the eighteenth century and houses a footprint of the Goraknath. Below this group there is the temple of Gujeswari, the shrine of the spouse of Siva in her manifestation as Kali. Its construction date is not known but the first records of repair were made by Pratap Malla in the seventeenth century. Access to this shrine is also limited to followers of the Hindu faith. To itemize and identify all the beautiful religious works of art to be found in this temple complex would take too long and be too difficult, but most of the important examples will speak for themselves.

Chabahil

Returning to the main road and continuing in the direction of Baudhanath, it is worth stopping a while at Chabahil, the small stupa located on the west of the road before you enter the next village. The village known as Chabahil is a very early settlement containing two important *bahals*, the Ganesh shrine protecting Pashupati and the stupa reckoned to be of the third century B.C. and therefore one of the earliest in the valley. It has legendary associations with King Brishadev, and there is a story that it was built with the remains of the materials excavated during the construction of Baudhanath. There are several early classical stone sculptures, including a standing Buddha of the ninth century and an interesting stone image of Manjusri set in a small

brick construction. Around the base of the stupa itself, there is an interesting collection of stone carvings, including images of horses and female devotees. In a stucco building to the north of the stupa, there is a large seated Buddha of unknown origin with a small aperture beneath it. Local belief has it that if you can crawl through this opening you are never guilty of telling lies.

The Chabahil and Kuti Bahal are to be found at the back of the stupa. Little remains of their former beauty but according to legend Chabahil Bahal was founded by Charumati, the daughter of King Asoka. Access to them is difficult to describe but any of the local people will lead you to them.

Baudhanath

On the outskirts of Chabahil, you will have your first glimpse of the massive Baudhanath stupa, which rises out of the paddy fields against the brilliant blue sky and the backdrop of the snow peaks of the Himalayas. This is truly one of the great sights to behold in the Katmandu Valley. At first, it is not possible to relate its size to anything tangible, but gradually the encircling dwellings become apparent. When you arrive at the entrance to the stupa you feel dwarfed by its size and there is nowhere that you can stand back and take it in as a whole. Once you have started on the circumambulation of the shrine you will be distracted by the trinket shops and the children who congregate around this centre of pilgrimage. Baudhanath has always been a trading centre and the shops that now sell souvenirs were formerly owned and run by Newari goldsmiths and silversmiths who traded with Tibet, and Tibetans used to travel, as they still do today, from the mountains to trade and barter during the major festivals, thus combining business with pilgrimage. On the western side of the stupa there are still lodging houses for itinerant hillmen, more especially from the Gurung settlements.

Of the traditional Newari goldsmiths shops only one still survives in its original form and that is in the north-western corner. Newari traders, especially silversmiths, are still to be found near the gateway to the stupa itself, where traditional silver repoussé work is carried out. Unfortunately, their original building has been superseded by an ugly concrete box.

The origin of the stupa is a little obscure. It is reputed that it was built by a girl of supernatural birth called Kangma, who was guilty of stealing flowers from Indra's heaven. As punishment she was reborn as the daughter of a swineherd in the

Katmandu Valley. She married, had four children and was widowed. Left to her own devices, she became a goose girl and accumulated a fortune from her labours. She wanted to build a noble temple to Buddha Amitabha and requested the king to give her as much ground as the hide of a buffalo would cover. The king agreed and the girl cut the hide into thin strips, and joined them together. Stretching the thongs out to form a square she claimed-and in spite of local jealousies, was given-the land on which she commenced building the Baudhanath stupa. After her death her sons completed the stupa and placed in it some relics of Kasyapa Buddha. Over the centuries, however, the basic form of the stupa has been altered. Today, the dome is set on a platform in the shape of a mandala and supports a finely proportioned pinnacle which, unlike Swayambhu, is square in section. The dome and its base are painted white and coloured with yellow paint in the form of petals to signify the lotus. During the major festivals, hundreds of prayer flags are draped from the pinnacle to the perimeter of the platform. The enclosing wall around the stupa is studded with hundreds of prayer wheels that are spun by the faithful as they promenade around and around the stupa.

As at Swayambhu, there is, at the entrance to the stupa itself, an image of Chwaskamini Ajima in silver plate set in a small shrine. Behind the shrine there is a splendid over-life-size prayer wheel and alongside it there are some interesting images, some of which are of Hindu origin.

To get just a brief insight into the Buddhist way of life, it is worth visiting one of the many new monasteries that have sprung up around Baudhanath. Most of the monasteries follow a standard pattern of layout. An open porch leads into the main chapel with the main altar containing the divinities facing the entrance. The chapel is usually square in plan and generally about 8 by 8 metres. The heavy ceiling structure and roof are supported by four centrally placed pillars with heavy carved cantilever brackets. The interior is usually rather dark and an air of tranquillity pervades. They are, despite the lack of light, ornately painted with scenes from the life of the Buddha. The pillars and brackets are embossed and embellished with gold paint and the ceiling is painted in vivid colours. The chapels are always spotlessly clean and visitors are welcome at all times. If possible, one should visit such a monastery during one of the daily prayer recitals, as it is only then that the true atmosphere can be felt.

Dhum Varahi

When returning, if you take the new ring road from Chabahil in the direction of Maharajung you will be able to visit one of the oldest shrines in the valley. It is the shrine of Dhum Varahi, which is located on the left of the road, a short distance after the bridge over the Dhobikola River. This sixth-century stone sculpture set in a small brick shrine is of Vishnu in his incarnation as the boar. He assumed this disguise to destroy the demon Hiranyaksha who was pulling the earth under water. It is a life-size sculpture of great beauty and it is remarkable that a piece of such fine quality should be found in such a remote area. It can only suggest that there was an important settlement here some time in the past.

Budhanilkantha

The next place to visit is Budhanilkantha, which can be reached along the main road through Maharajung, leading north out of Katmandu. If you continue along the ring road and take the next turning north after this last stop you will be on the right

Fig. 16.
Budhanilkantha-
the reclining Vishnu.

road. Budhanilkantha lies beneath the hill of Shivapuri and at the northernmost extremity of the valley. It is another representation of Vishnu, reputedly dating from the fifth century. The image depicts Vishnu asleep, reclining on a bed of snakes as a result of having drunk a draught of poison. The image, which is said to be carved out of one piece of stone, is set in a pool thus giving it the appearance of floating. During the major festival of Baikuntha Chaturdasi in the month of November, thousands of people from all over the valley flock to worship this image of Vishnu.

If there is still time available, it is worth while continuing along the road and driving up to the former isolation hospital above the new school. From here there are magnificent views over the valley.

Patan Durbar Square

As in the Katmandu Durbar Square, there are very fine buildings of religious and royal foundation centred around the royal palace. The Patan Durbar Square is smaller than that of Katmandu ; nevertheless it contains some very special buildings. As the palace is no longer occupied as an official residence, it is possible to visit all the courtyards and therefore to get some idea of what those inaccessible areas in the Hanuman Dhoka are like. Unlike the latter, the chowks or courtyards of Patan are not interconnecting. Each chowk is accessible from the main road along which they are strung, and at the rear they lead through narrow doorways to the former palace garden. On the opposite side of the road to the palace there are some interesting temples, mostly founded by royal patronage.

The Patan Durbar Square is located in the very heart of the city, at the meeting-point of the two trading routes now known as Mangal Bazaar. The open square containing the palace and the temples is delineated by a boundary of irregular-shaped dwellings. All the temples located in this open square are set facing the entrance to the palace, even though there was no predetermined layout. Most of them were built by royalty in memory of their respective parents and therefore their religious importance varies. However, each building records an element of the historical development of this durbar square.

The palace courtyards, which appear to have been built as separate units, following traditional plans, are of typical construction, but have no regard for the neighbouring structures. No existing building in the palace dates before the seventeenth century, although the present structures probably stand on almost identical foundations of earlier buildings or even replace

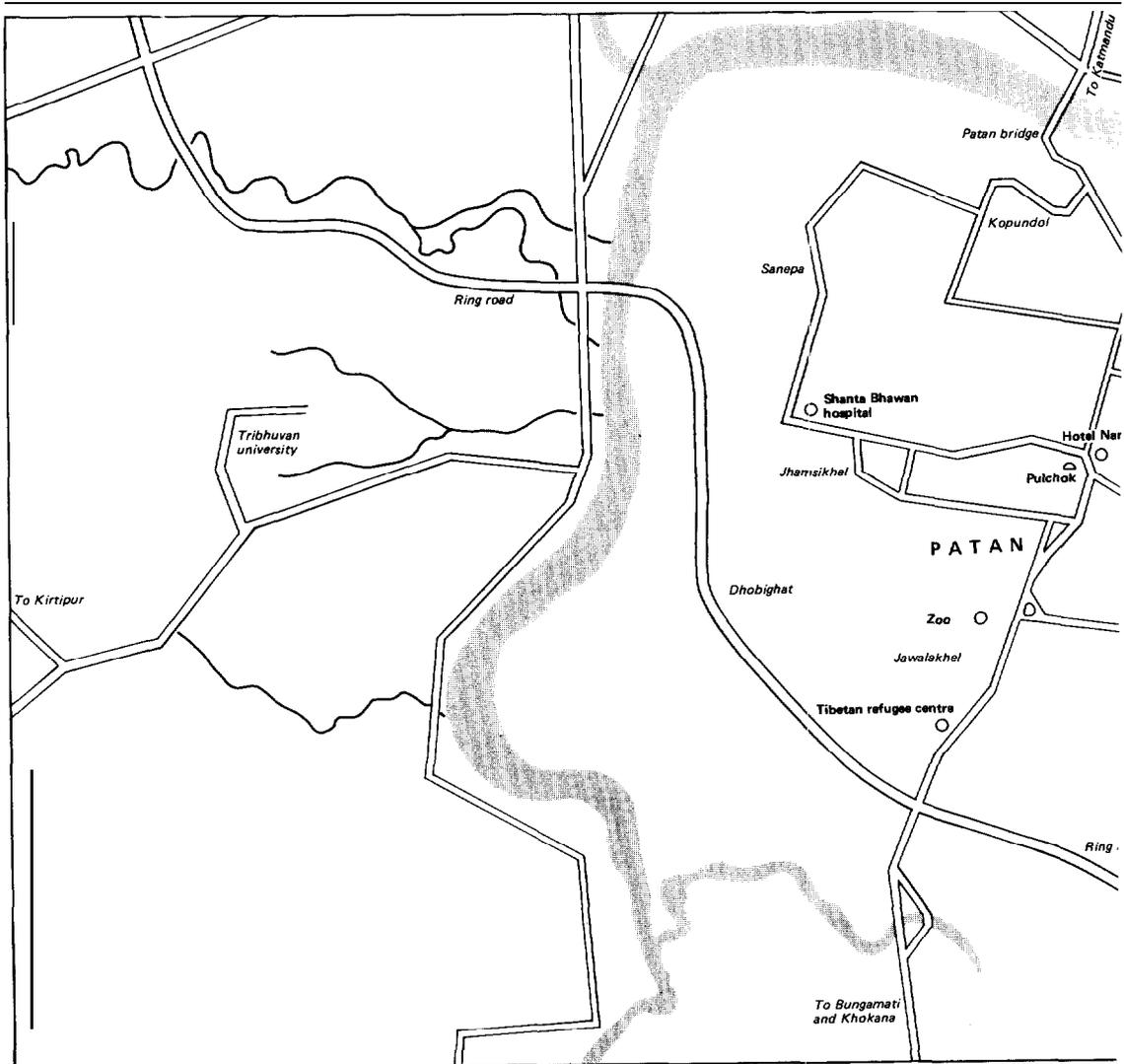
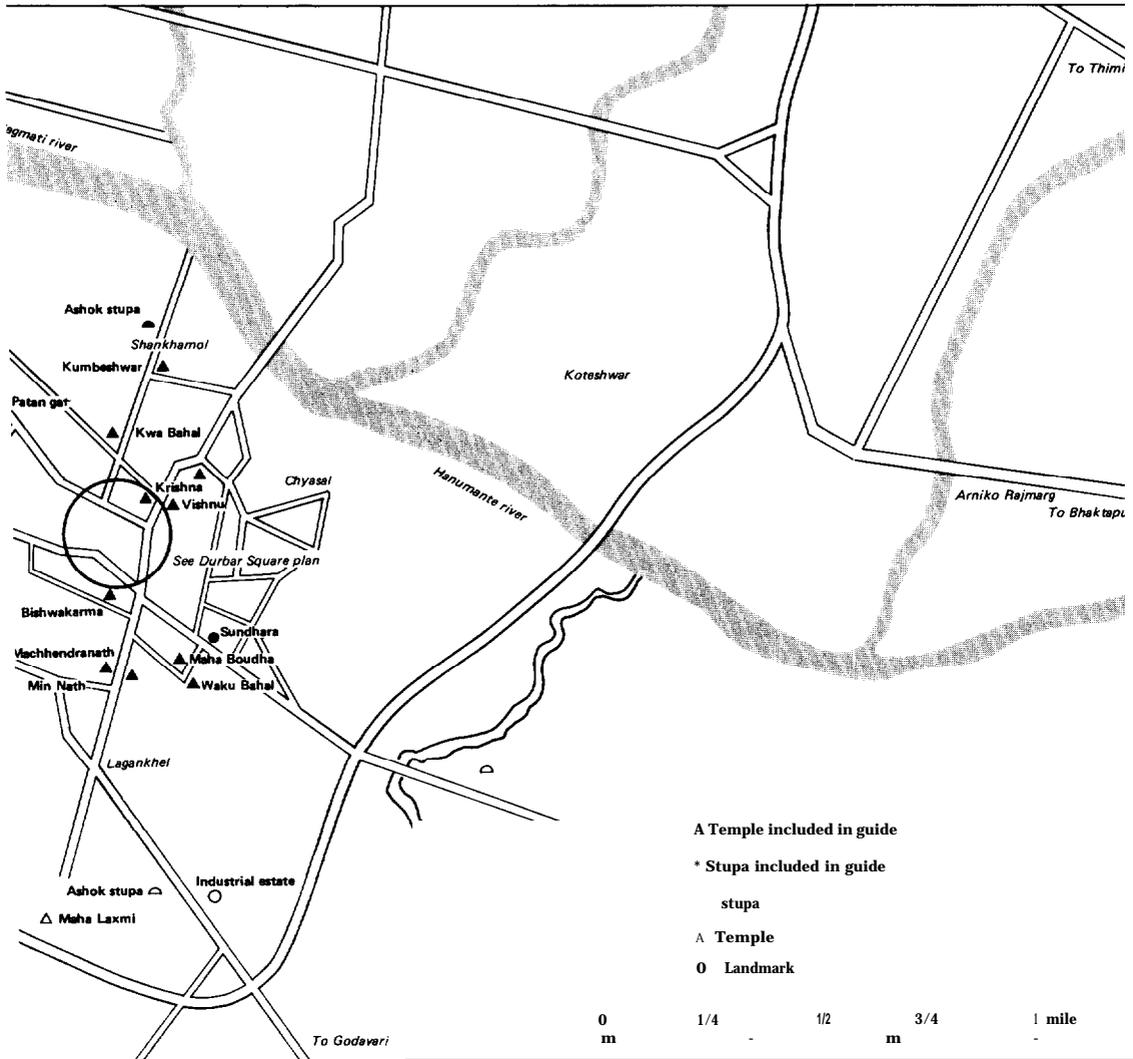


Fig. 17
Patan city map.



them. The palace took its present form largely during the reign of Siddhi Narasingha Malla and Shrinivasa Malla, who reigned between 1620 and 1660 and between 1660 and 1684 respectively.

Sundari Chowk, the most westerly courtyard and the first you come to, was completed in 1627 and was designed as the residence of Siddhinarasingha and his family. At the same time, the Tusa Hiti, the beautiful bathing tank and water-spout, were built in the centre of the courtyard. The octagonal form of this tank was to emphasize the king's devotion to the eight Nagas, the goddesses of rain. The inner walls of the tank are lined with hundreds of deities in stone and metal, consisting of the Astamatrikas, the Astabhairabs, the Astanagas as well as the Dashavatal of Vishnu, in fact all the favourite gods of the king. The water-spout itself is a gilded conch shell and the water is piped from the surrounding hills. The perimeter of the tank is surrounded by a pair of dragons carved in stone. At the entrance to the bath there is a stone slab raised off the ground, which was used as a throne for meditation by the king. The courtyard is enclosed by a three storeyed building with exquisitely carved details in the windows, doors and other decorative elements. These would have been the living quarters of the king and his family.

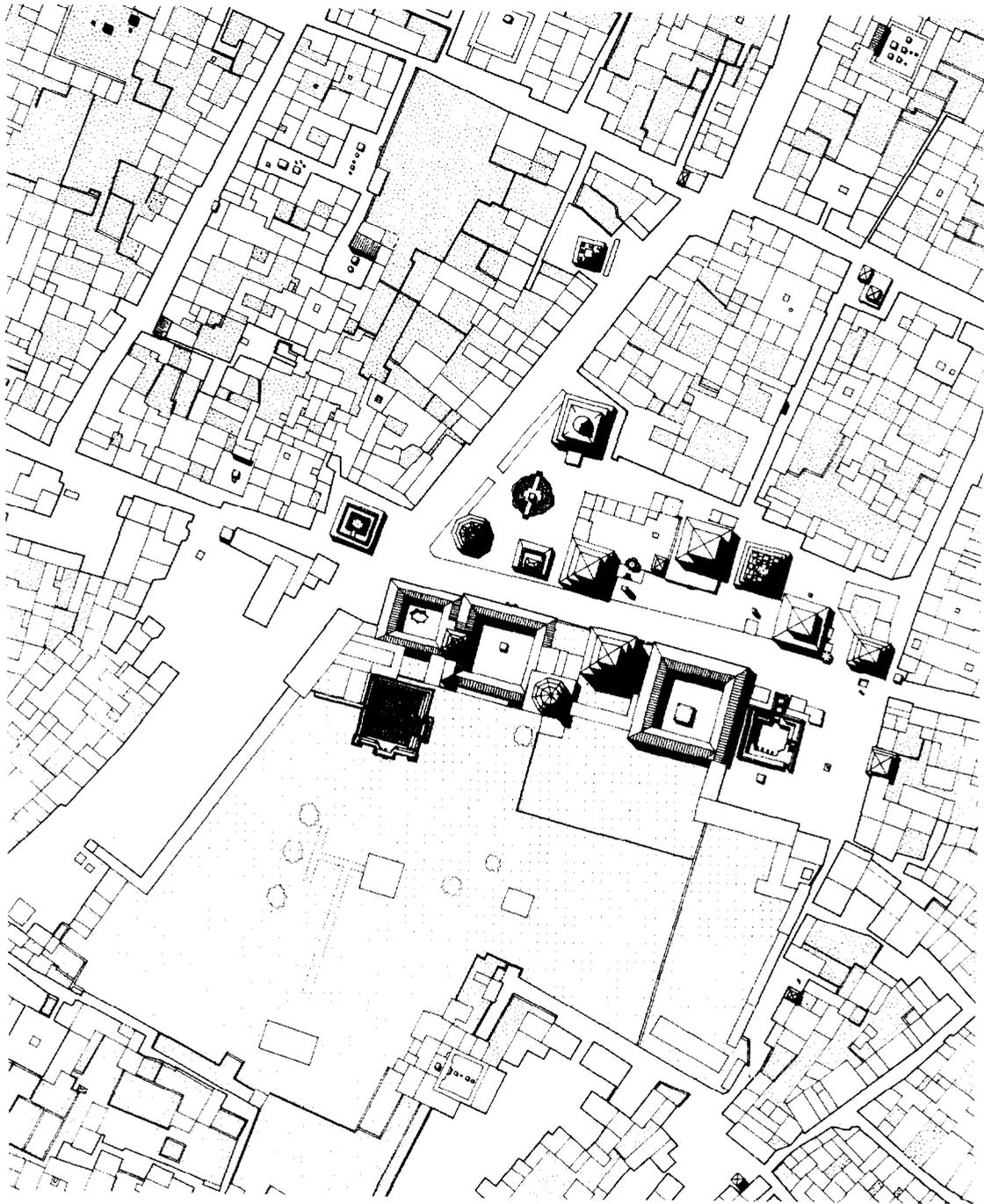
The present entrance to this courtyard is through a very narrow doorway to the left of a more impressive entrance. This larger entrance was completely bricked up until recently, as it was said that the doorway was controlled by an evil spirit. To this day, nobody will use it for fear of the consequences. The main entrance is guarded by images of Narasingha Hanuman and Ganesh. The central window over the door is of gilded metal and is flanked by windows decorated in ivory. Even the name Sundari Chowk, meaning 'magnificent', given by Siddhinarasingha hardly does justice to the beauty of this little courtyard.

The next courtyard is the Mu1 Chowk, completed in 1660. It is probable that Siddhinarasingha commenced its construction and that it was completed by his successor Shrinivasa as a dedication to the goddess Durga. However, the deity Mantraju, for which the small central gilded sanctuary, the Bidya Mandir., was erected, was the favourite house goddess of the ruler. Shortly afterwards, Shrinivasa Malla erected a temple for the Agamdevta, or secret house goddess, in the south wing of the courtyard, which is still guarded by the life-size figures of Ganga and Yamuna in gilded bronze. Over the shrine there is a three-tiered roof. What remains of the beautiful metal doorway at the entrance of the shrine is indeed a tribute to the metalworking

fig. 18.

map of Patan

Durbar Square.





castes for which Patan is still famous. As in the Hanuman Dhoka Palace, the Patan Mu1 Chowk is a low two-storey building housing the priests who officiated in the palace. Although much altered in recent years, it still retains its beautifully carved supporting roof struts depicting the Bhairabs and the Matrikas. Much of their beauty, however, is masked by the thick layers of paint covering them. In the north-eastern corner there is the Taleju Temple, which was built by Shrinivasa Malla and completed in 1671. It was erected over the three-storeyed palace building and consists of a three-tiered roof, the corners of which have been cut off to give it the impression of having an octagonal form. This building can only be entered by the priests responsible for the worship of the deity.

As the courtyard was used as a gathering place for various religious dances and ceremonies, it will be noticed that the doors are much larger and the entrance is guarded by two stone lions.

Adjacent to the Mul Chowk and dominating the palace complex because of its size is the Degu Talle, again constructed by Siddhinarasingha in 1641. It was originally a four-storeyed building, although it reached five storeys before it was destroyed by fire. It is built off a part of the palace with a triple-tiered roof

Fig. 19a.



Fig. 19b.
Patan Durbar Square
(today).

structure. The temple is dedicated to Taleju Bhawani, and is inaccessible to all but the priests. There is a special room built on the orders of the king where he could retire for prayers, meditation and the recitation of mantras. Recently, this building has undergone renovation.

The third courtyard of the palace complex, now occupied as a museum, is the Keshabharayan Chowk. This is the main palace building and the last of the courtyards to be completed. It took about sixty years to build starting in the reign of Shrinivasa Malla and was dedicated by his successor, Shrivishnu, in 1734. To facilitate this extension of the palace, it was necessary to remove the adjacent Buddhist monastery known as Hakhusi Bahal, which caused difficulties of a mainly religious nature. The *bahal* was duly removed and rebuilt close by. Since then, on the occasion of certain Buddhist festivals, an image of Lord Buddha, encased in a square copper container, is placed in front of the main door where it is the object of great devotion.

The inner courtyard façades have succumbed to the results of poor alterations and restoration. The external elevation, however, is of exceptional beauty and well worth closer study. It is probable that the projecting balconies and the beautiful

central gilded window were added to the lower storeys by Shri-Vishnu Malla and erected, according to the chronicles, in three months. Although these windows are coated in dirt and paint, it is possible to visualize the intricacy of the carvings. The central gilded window is one of the finest of its kind and it is here that the kings would sit to look out over their subjects and to gaze upon the beautiful Krishna Mandir.

Leaving the Keshab Narayan Chowk, the most striking building opposite, the magnificent Krishna Mandir, will be the first to catch your eye. It was the favourite of its builder, Siddhinarsingha Malla, who completed it in 1637, having taken six years to construct it. It is one of only a few buildings in stone and contains some very delicate relief carvings of the two epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, around the lintels above the colonnade. The temple is of the shikhara style and the tower only emerges after the second storey. The temple is set on a stone plinth and the lower floor to the shrine is arcaded. The actual sanctum is on the first floor which is formed, as is the second level, of a series of smaller pavilions capped with pinnacles. Take a moment to study the friezes depicting the epics. Although to all but the scholar it is difficult at first to separate one from the other, the individual tableaux are graphically illustrated and follow in sequence in a clockwise direction rather like a strip cartoon.

Adjacent to the Krishna Mandir is a large two-tiered temple with a pair of guardian elephants on either side of the entrance to the sanctuary. This is the Bishwanath Temple, built in 1626 by Siddhinarsingha. It is of unusual form in that around the inner sanctum it has an arcade of finely carved timber pillars which are supported by carved stone sills. Above each pair of pillars there are ornately carved toranas depicting various divinities or aspects of Siva. The supporting carved roof struts figure Ganesh, Surya-the sun god-Annapurna, and Siva with Parvati. It is one of the earlier temples in the durbar square and merits a closer look than most.

Close by is another large temple, the Bhimsen Mandir, which is one of the most important temples in the square. Like the Bhimsen Temple in Katmandu, it is worshipped in especially by the businessmen of Patan. The sanctuary is also on the upper floor and is lit by a large balconied window over the entrance door. The temple was built under royal patronage by Shrinivasa Malla and completed in 1681. Although it has been 'modernized' by the application of glazed tiles and silver paint to the lower carvings, there are still some fine carvings to be

seen. For example, on the southern elevation, a wooden panel narrates episodes from Bhimsen's life. The topmost of the three tiers of roof is covered in gilded metal and has a fine set of finials ; from the centre of this roof falls a metal ribbon-like banner with mantras engraved on it, given by some wealthy benefactor. The temple is open for worship every day, but is especially popular on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

Directly opposite the entrance to Bhimsen Mandir there is perhaps the oldest physical structure in the durbar square-the Mangal Hiti-an important water conduit which was originally excavated in the tenth century during the Lichhavi period. This tank is now at least 4 metres below the present street level and still provides a good source of water which pours from the mouths of three stone crocodiles. There are also images of Lakshminarayan and Barume set into the walls of the conduit.

Returning to the upper end of the durbar square, you will find further interesting temples and shrines. The large three-tiered and arcaded temple dedicated to Hari Shankar was built by Siddhinarasingha in the seventeenth century. The size of this temple is important. It acts as a stop to the southern end of the square, as the temples and bell beyond are not of such importance to the square's overall environment. The kneeling elephants at the entrance to the sanctum and the exquisitely carved toranas are noteworthy.

Somewhat dwarfed by the Hari Shankar Mandir is a small two-tiered temple of great historical importance, the Char Narayan Mandir. It was built in 1566 by Purandharsingha and there is an inscription recording his setting up images of Narayan and his four attendants. The style of building characteristic of these early temples is well represented here. The temple's proportions are squat with a dominating set of roofs ; the angle of the brackets is flatter, but perhaps the most dominant features on all four elevations are the heavy doors and flanking windows with simple sills and frames. These doorways lead into an inner circumambulatory around the shrine, which has openings on all four sides and contains a central stone linga representing the deity.

Although it is on the edge of the durbar square, the unusual octagonal stone temple dedicated to Krishna, and completed in 1723, is worth looking at. There are a few traditional temples with an octagonal plan but this is the only stone building of its kind. Although plain in decoration, its design was no doubt influenced by the Mogul architecture of India. It was built by Yogamati, Yogendra Malla's daughter, after the death of her

father and son Lokaprakasha, to gain merit for them in their next life.

This completes the tour of the most important buildings in this durbar square, which must rank as being one of the most beautiful city environments in the world. Perhaps during your walk among these unique buildings you will have noticed, first, that they are not shown off at their best and that, secondly, even to an untrained eye, both their structure and fabric are in a poor condition. Now this is where the activities of Unesco can assist the Nepalese Government in raising funds and in implementing a conservation programme to save this cultural heritage. Any funds towards this programme would be welcome. Details of where to send donations can be found in the introduction to this book.

Places to discover in Patan

There are two separate walks around Patan that can be combined into one but, as they are on either side of the durbar square, for the sake of ease they have been divided.

North Patan: Kumbheswar and Kwa Bahal

Taking the northern route out of the durbar square, leaving Bhimsen Mandir on your left, you enter a typical streetscape starting narrow, only to widen out into a small open square in front of a temple. The large temple on the right is dedicated to Krishna. It is a well-proportioned three-tiered temple with fine roof struts depicting the incarnations of Vishnu.

The little two-tiered temple on the right is worth a closer look, if only to see the fine Garuda image which was donated in 1706, the nag or snake set into the paving and the beautiful stone image of Vishnu with four hands in the shrine.

The street narrows again and the original paving to the road and the open drainage system are apparent. An opening to the left contains an insignificant little two-tiered shrine ; however, in the shrine known as Uma Maheswar there is one of the most beautiful stone carvings of the tenth century. It is a representation of Siva and his consort Parvati. Beneath them, an inscription records its construction.

A few hundred metres beyond, a turning to the left leads down a paved street between two lines of fine terraced houses

typifying the traditional Newari town house. As the street opens out to your right there is the beautiful Kumbheswar Temple towering above the surrounding houses.

Kumbheswar is located within its own complex of rest-houses, small shrines and a tank. The main temple, with its magnificent five tiers of diminishing roofs, is reckoned to be the oldest temple in Patan, although today its form is very different to what it was originally. It was built in 1392, during the reign of Jayastithi Malla, when the temple was referred to as two-tiered. It was during the reign of Shrinevasa Malla, 1660-84, that the upper three roofs were added making it one of two major temples in the valley with five roofs. The temple itself is very delicate in design but the two lower roofs have similar proportions to that of the Char Narayan mentioned earlier. The supporting roof struts, the windows and doors are all heavily carved and are very beautiful. As you will notice, their condition is, sadly, very poor. The inner sanctum contains a very beautiful gilded silver linga.

In the compound there are several interesting smaller shrines of varying ages and importance. Several of these are of Licchavi origin, making this sector of Patan one of the earliest parts of the city. It is a very important site for religious festivals ; the main festival being the Kumbheswar Mela, during Janai Purnima, which is described in the chapter on festivals, on page 33.

One of the earliest Buddhist stupas in Patan is located just behind Kumbheswar. Taking a right-hand turn out the back gate of the compound beneath the enormous pipal tree, the road leads round to the left. Follow this for a few hundred metres, and the stupa will be visible on the left. This is one of the five stupas believed to have been built by Asoka, the Mauryan king of India, while visiting Nepal on a pilgrimage. Its origin, therefore, dates back to the third century **b.c.** Unlike the others, this stupa has been plastered over but it is certain to have been a fairly recent alteration. There are several other good Buddhist sculptures within the compound.

Retracing your tracks to Kumbheswar, take now the direct but narrower road into the city between further good examples of town dwellings. After the road widens, you will see on your right a small entrance guarded by a pair of temple lions. This is the entrance to the Kwa Bahal, one of the most spectacular of the many hundreds of Buddhist monasteries to be found in and around Patan. Often referred to as Hemavarna Mahavihar, this monastery was founded in 1409 and is dedicated to Gautama

Buddha. The whole façade of the main temple enshrining the Buddha and the roofs are covered with embossed gilded copper. The metalwork, especially of the toranas, is very detailed and finely executed. The small shrine in the centre of the courtyard is lavishly embellished with metal designs and figures, all of which merit a closer look. You will notice that many details are of strong Hindu influence. The crowning pinnacle, or gajur, to this shrine is very ornate indeed and, although a little top-heavy, a masterpiece on its own. This is still a very active monastery and many different families take in in turns to look after and officiate at the shrine. The people are very friendly and one of the boy monks will be pleased to take you up into the monastery to see the frescoes and other images of Buddha. This is one of the few monastic buildings that is well endowed and where a conscious effort is made by its members to look after the building's structure and fabric.

Returning to the main road, you can continue along it and take a sharp turning to the left, which will lead you back to the durbar square.

South Patan:
Maha Baudha,
Uku Bahal,
Min Nath and
Machhendra Nath

Having passed through the durbar square, you take a turning left, in an easterly direction, through the vegetable market and pass along a brick-paved street between terraced houses of a much later period. After several hundred metres the road opens out into a fairly large terrace square containing two stone shikhara temples and a water conduit.

The water conduit is known as Sundhara, or golden tap, because of its beautiful gilded water-spouts. The exact history of this watering place is not certain but records show that it underwent renovation in 1701. This square is one of the important stopping places during the Rato Machhendra chariot festival and legend has it that the water-spouts were constructed to provide refreshment for the god.

At this point you take a right turn up a paved street. Almost at the top of the street, there is a narrow entrance to the right which leads through to the rather special terracotta temple

known as Maha Baudha. This shikhara-style temple is located in a narrow irregular courtyard that must have been a monastery. It is now unfortunately dwarfed by ugly modern buildings. The design and material of the temple are unique in the valley. All the façades are completely covered with hundreds of terracotta plaques in relief, each depicting the Buddha seated in a niche. The temple is built in two parts, a square base containing the shrine and the high tapering tower with four small pinnacles in each corner. This temple is a copy of the Mahabodi Temple of Bodhgaya in Bihar, India. The builder, Abhayaraja Shakya, saw the original while on pilgrimage and bringing back an image of the Buddha decided to enshrine it in a similar structure. Apparently it took several generations to complete. During the violent earthquake of 1934, this temple was badly damaged. Subsequent efforts at repairing it were confused by the great many parts that could not be put back during the renovation. and these were therefore assembled separately and now form a Maha Baudha. secondary shrine in one corner. *Fig. 20.*

Turning right out of the alley, the main street takes a further sharp right turn. However, you are now looking for the Uku Bahal which is located off an opening to the left. The Uku Bahal is one of the most famous Buddhist monasteries in Patan. It is probable that King Shivadeva had the temple built sometime in the 1650s and he performed his own initiation rites here. A very splendid doorway to the main shrine, with a decorative metal arch, was donated in 1676 and the struts supporting the first roof depicting the live Mahabuddhas were donated in 1653, all of which establishes this as one of the earlier bahals. The building is large and rectangular with two tiers of roof. The upper roof is capped with a resplendent series of gilded pinnacles. The courtyard is tiled with a wonderful collection of animals made of metal, as well as several important votive chaityas, which makes it a great favourite among visitors.

Returning to the main street you continue straight ahead along the main road. This is the route taken by the chariot. Continue along this road until you enter the area of the metal-workers at a short distance before a main junction. In this town or district, you will be able to see the coppersmiths beating out the brass and copper cooking pots of all sizes, varying from the domestic pot to enormous cooking pots that are used during festival picnics.

At the point where this road meets a main road, you turn left. A short way up this road there will be an opening on both sides leading on the right to the Machhendra Temple and on the

left to the Min Nath, which we will visit first. This is a small two-tiered temple enshrining a Buddhist deity. The deity is brought out during the great Machhendra festival and follows behind the big chariot in a much smaller chariot dragged by the local children. The temple has an elaborate entrance with latticed doors, a torana and big prayer wheels. It was built by Halarchan Dev during the sixteenth century.

Across the road is the entrance to one of the most famous temples in Patan and one of the most popular in the religious life of the community. It is the Macchendra Nath, probably built by Shrinivas Malla in the 1670s. It is a beautiful three-tiered structure located in a large open park, with metal-covered roofs bordered with wind bells. It has intricately carved doorways with flanking windows on each elevation. Each entrance is guarded by a pair of animals and the plinth is enclosed with a wall of prayer wheels. There are some fine carved struts with representations of the Avalokiteswara on the upper section, while beneath there are scenes of torture being meted out to the condemned souls in hell. The deity represented in the shrine is Avalokiteswai Padmapani, popularly known as Matsyandranath. He is worshipped by all as the god of rain and plenty, hence the importance of the Macchendra festival just prior to the monsoon. As explained in the section on festivals, the god was originally the Bundyo of Bungamati. Each year, the god therefore spends three months in Bungamati, an arrangement probably made by Shrinivasi Malla.

Returning to the main road, you turn left out of the temple compound and walk down the hill, passing through the shops that sell most of the metalwork in Patan. These shops are owned by the Tamrakar caste who beat and cast copper and brass for everyday implements, for votive offerings in the temples.

One interesting little shrine dedicated to Bishwakarma, the god of the craftsmen, can be found down an alley on the left, shortly before you reach the durbar square. This shrine is, in fact, an agam or private house god, worshipped by a *guthi* group. The façade to the shrine is of embossed and gilded copper which was added in 1885. The shrine is located at ground level in an open niche with a very decorative torana over it. Above the door is a window with an unusual solar disc and interlocking triangle design. Both the upper windows are flanked with interesting embossed images and divinities. The entrance is guarded by the figures Ganga and Yamuna.

It will be necessary to retrace your tracks to the main road, from where the durbar square is only a short distance.

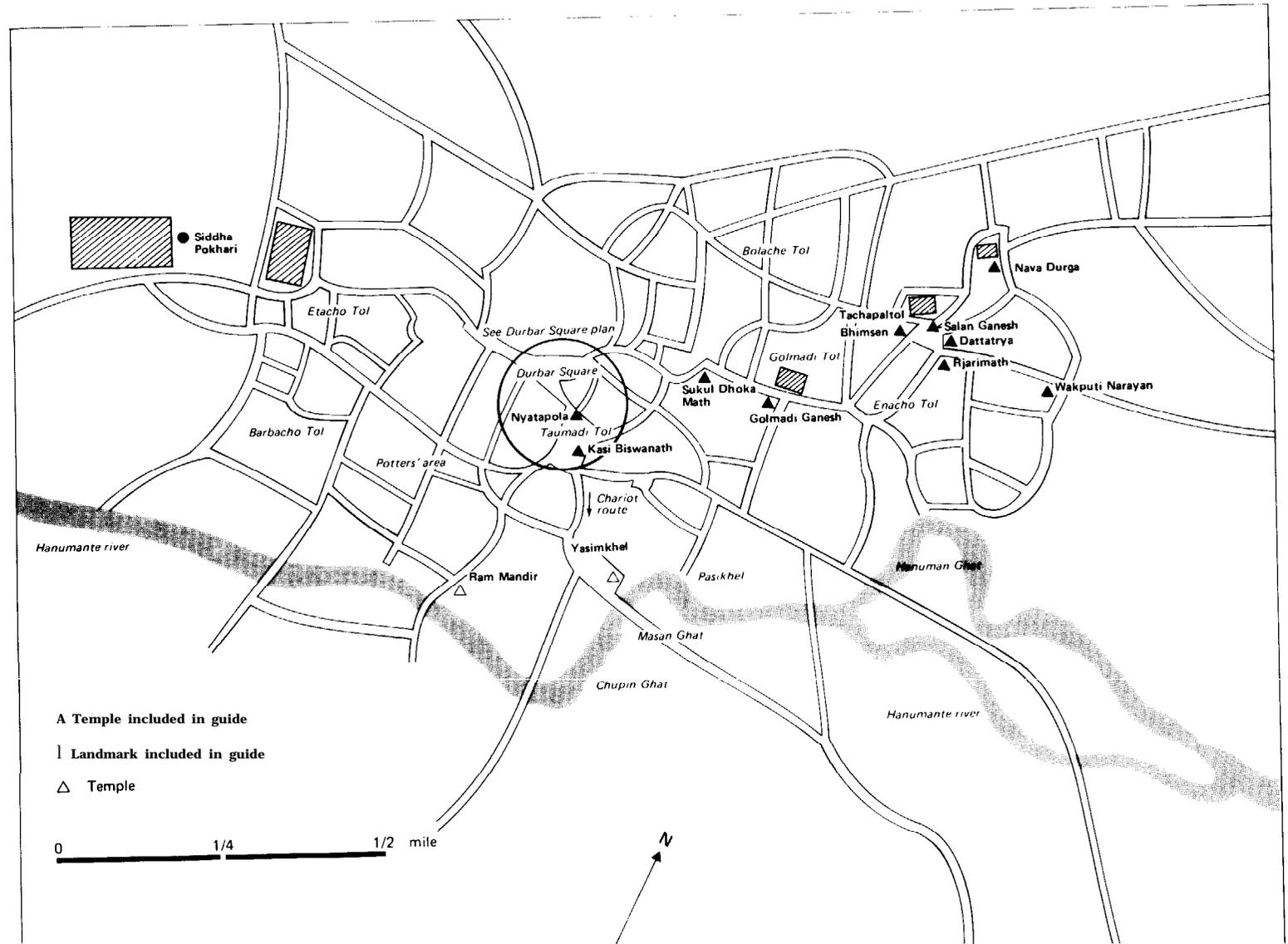
Bhaktapur Durbar Square

Unlike the other durbar squares, that of Bhaktapur is not in the city centre, but lies to the north of the city and is linked only by small alleyways to the more important and imposing square known as the Taumadhi Tol. located south-east and below the durbar square.

The present durbar square is a shadow of its former self, as much of it has disappeared or was razed to the ground during the 1934 earthquake. Legend has it that there were as many as ninety-nine courtyards attached to this palace. In 1742, twelve existed in reality, of which only six remain today. The result of the earthquake is still evident ; whereas in other areas temples were rebuilt, in this square the damage was so severe that in many cases only the bases remained, other areas are still under rubble. Prior to the earthquake, it seems that there were probably three separate groups of temples, but today the square seems very empty and fringed only with buildings.

Unlike the other two durbar squares, it is not possible to enter and examine the chowks of the royal palace, except for the Nag Pokhari and the areas you can see from visiting the interesting museum which is located in sections of the palace.

Let us first take a look at the palace buildings. It is difficult to determine exactly the early history of the palace but it is believed that it was built when the city was established in the ninth century. At this time, the palace was known as Tipura and was the seat of the defacto authority of the kingdom. However, none of the structures of this period still remain and most information uncovered to date indicates that most of the palace, other than the Mul Chowk, dates from the late sixteenth, early seventeenth century.



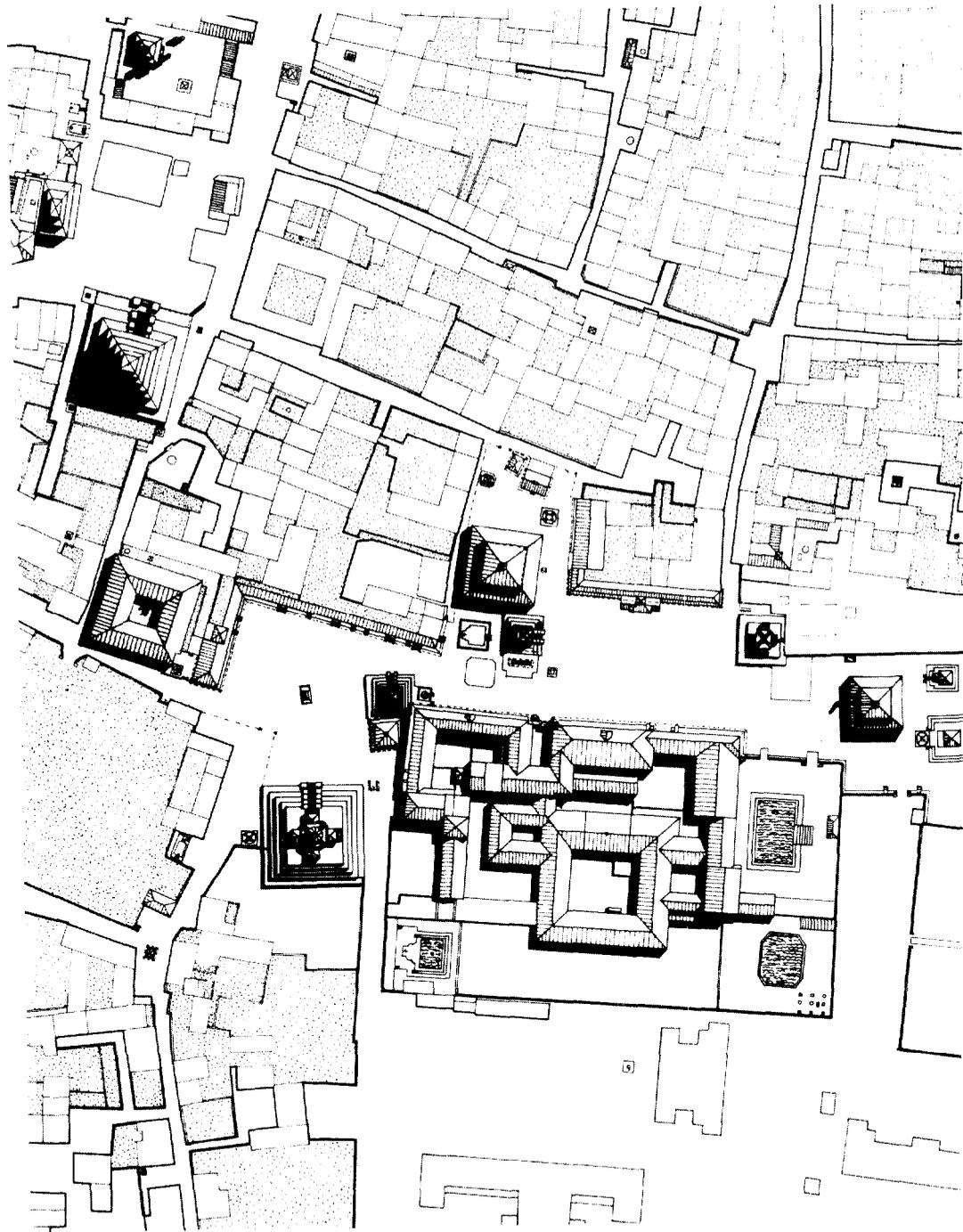
The focal point of the palace now is the centrally placed golden gate, or Sun Dhoka, as it is called. Facing this, the buildings to the left or west, which represent two wings of the palace, were constructed during the reign of Jagat Jyoti Malla from 1613 to 1637. They have since been much altered and today they form the major part of the museum.

The Sun Dhoka, often compared to Ghiberti's famous doors in the Baptistery in Florence, Italy, was erected in 1753 by Jaya Ranjit Malla, and is perhaps the finest example of gilded copper-work to be found in Bhaktapur and even in the Katmandu Valley. It is very ornate and the panels around the door-frame, which depict a series of ten divinities including Ganesh, are in very fine repoussé work. The gate is capped with a small gilded roof surmounted with decorated finials and detailed images of winged lions and elephants. Although rather strangely located the gate marks the entrance to the Taleju Temple.

Fig. 21.
Bhaktapur city map.

One of the striking monuments of the square is the statue of Bupatindra Malla raised on a pillar opposite the Sun Dhoka. The king is kneeling on a throne supported by four lions, which rest on a stone lotus flower. The king carries his weapons of war at his side but is in an attitude of prayer. He is dressed in the attire common in those days. This statue is a just tribute to a man who was responsible for not only renovating many of the buildings surrounding him but also for their construction.

Passing through the gate and through a further low entrance door you enter what is known as Beko Chowk, which today appears to be the backs of a series of palace buildings and hardly the main route to reach the Mu1 Chowk. Following this courtyard around to the left you will come to an entrance door with a carved wooden surround of exquisite beauty. Unfortunately, foreign visitors are not permitted beyond this doorway into the Taleju Chowk and the Kumari Chowk, which are said to contain some of the most important works of art in the valley. The foundation of the Mu1 Chowk dates back to the thirteenth century. Unlike the other two durbar squares, the Taleju shrine in Bhaktapur is not an impressively tall building, but a shrine of a single storey with rich ornamentation. By placing yourself judiciously in the doorway, it is possible to have a glimpse of some of the beautiful gilded copper images in front of the main shrine, the roof of which is capped with as many as eleven small spires and some rather exotic serpents that slide down the ribbed roof. This courtyard has been the subject of many donations by various Bhaktapur monarchs, but especially Bupatindra Malla.



Beyond the Mu1 Chowk is the Kumari Chowk, said to be one of the gems of Nepalese architecture, which is attributed to Jitmitra Malla.

In the north-east corner of the courtyard, a small wooden door leads into a former courtyard containing a beautiful bathing pool known as Nag Pokhari. This bathing courtyard was constructed in the early seventeenth century under the direction of Jagatir Malla, and later repaired by Jitmitra Malla when he had the wooden post with a gilded head of Vasuki, the snake god, erected. The sunken pool with its beautiful golden water-spout was formerly richly adorned with fine stone sculptures. It is probable that, as in the other durbar squares, it was originally surrounded with buildings. The water is said to be piped by conduit for seven miles. It is worth studying the remaining sculptures and in particular the beautiful gilded water-spout.

Fig. 22.
Map of Bhaktapur
Durbar Square.

Returning to the main square, on your left as you re-enter the square, there is an impressive wing of the palace built in 1697 by Bupatindra and generally referred to as 'the palace with the fifty-five windows'. It is a building of three storeys with, on the lower storeys, finely carved windows and doors and, on the upper floor, an open hall with fifty-five arcaded windows. This upper floor formerly projected, but during the 1934 earthquake the building was badly damaged and had to be reconstructed. Now these windows no longer form a projection, The palace was recently painted but it is hoped that the brick and timber will soon be returned to their natural colour.

Originally, on the right flank of the palace, there were further courtyards but all that remains of these today are the guardian lions. Similarly, several temples and rest-houses succumbed in the earthquake and all that remains are a few base platforms.

Different varieties and styles of temple remain in the durbar square. At the entrance to the square is a two-tiered temple known locally as Bansi Narayan. It has the format of an early structure but its date of foundation is not known. The wood-carvings of the roof struts represent incarnations of Vishnu and the deity enshrined is Krishna.

Behind the Bansi Narayan is an interesting shikhara-style temple built in a mixture of stone, brick, timber and terracotta. The temple is dedicated to Durga, the spouse of Siva.

Commanding a focal position close to the Golden Gate is the impressive temple of Batsala Durga, one of two very beautiful stone shikharas to be found in the durbar square.

Behind the statue there is a beautiful stone shikhara-style building dedicated to Batsala Durga. The construction of this

temple, which is a close copy of the Krishna Temple in Patan durbar, is attributed to Bupatindra Malla and it was completed in the late seventeenth century. About the temple there are many stone carvings of various divinities. Other interesting features are the copper pinnacles and the wind bells, which are an unusual feature on temples in the shikhara style. On the same platform as the Batsala Durga Temple are two bells ; the large one, rung during the worship of Taleju, was erected by Ranajit Malla in 1737, and a second bell, set adjacent to the entrance of the shrine, was placed there by Bupatindra Malla to counteract the ominous tone of death knell which he had heard in a dream.

This temple has only recently undergone extensive repair and consolidation in the hands of the Hanuman Dhoka Conservation Project Office. The structure was being undermined by tree roots which had smashed several stones. Earlier damage caused by the earthquake and the pinnacles were repaired ; many missing bells were matched with the original and replaced, and the stonework was carefully cleaned.

Adjacent to the Batsala Durga on the northern side and close to the palace of fifty-five windows, there is the Bhagbati Temple, the smaller of the two stone temples built in the shikhara style. It was erected in the seventeenth century, probably by Nupatindra Malla, and once again dedicated to Durga. Its most noteworthy features are the splendid pairs of guardians lining the steps to the sanctuary. In front of the sanctum, a series of relief panels depicts the Matrika goddesses.

The large two-tiered temple to the right of the Batsala Durga is known as Pashupatinath. This broad-based temple set on a low plinth was built by King Yaksha Malla, probably in the late fifteenth century, and has undergone several alterations during its history. It is said that King Yaksha was instructed in a dream to build the temple by Lord Pashupati. He was also to visit the temple every day. On the one day he failed to appear, Bagmati River flooded its banks. The temple does in fact resemble the main Pashupati Temple and there is also a small shrine to Gujeswari. The temple was severely damaged in the 1934 earthquake and most of it was rebuilt. The supporting roof struts are, however, from the original building and are of simple classical form, depicting Siva and important characters from the Ramayana. Beneath, there are several examples of erotica.

Places to discover in Bhaktapur

There are two worth-while walks in Bhaktapur, one is beyond the durbar square to the Taumadhi Tol, containing the famous Nyatapola ; the other is a tour through the eastern half of Bhaktapur taking in the Tachapal Tol area, which is at present part of a major rehabilitation scheme being carried out by the Nepalese Government with assistance from the Federal Republic of Germany.

The Taumadhi Tol is an extension of the durbar square, whereas to reach the Tachapal area takes about twenty minutes' walk through the streets of Bhaktapur. It is possible to drive there but there are some interesting buildings and shrines to see on the way which you would otherwise miss.

Taumadhi Tol- Nyatapola and Kasi Biswanath

Following the narrow road beyond the Pashupatinath you enter into one of the most impressive squares, known as Taumadhi Tol, over which towers the famous Nyatapola Temple. This temple, built by Nupatindra Malla in 1702, is set on a stepped platform of five diminishing plinths and has five tiered roofs of beautifully tapering proportions. Despite its rather garishly painted exterior, the carvings to the arcaded pillars, windows and supporting roof struts are of exceptional beauty. The latter, numbering 108, are representations of the diverse forms of Bhagubati Mahishamardini and other lesser divinities. The eaves of all the roofs are edged in hundreds of small wind bells. The inner sanctum contains a beautiful sculpture of Mahishamardini

or Siddhi Lakshmi. but this shrine is only occasionally visited by select priests. The inner sanctum is approached up a long flight of steps. which is lined with pairs of guardians arranged in order of increasing power from the bottom. The lowest figures, standing about 2.5 metres high. represent Jai Ma1 and Patta. the famous wrestlers of Bhaktapur reputed to possess the strength of ten men. Above them stand a pair of elephants possessing ten times the strength of the wrestlers. Next come two lions ten times more powerful than the elephants. These are superseded by two griffons which outrank the strength of the lions by 10 to 1. Finally, the stairway is topped by two minor deities, Simhini and Vyangini, who possess ten times the strength of the mythological griffon. This ascendancy in strength implies that the multiplication of power culminates in the goddess here worshipped. who is dominant over all through her supreme though unseen strength.

It is said that during the building of the temple. Bupatindra Malla himself carried bricks to the site, inspiring the locals to carry in five days sufficient materials for its erection.

Close to the Nyatapola, on the eastern side of the square, is another important shrine known as the Kasi Biswanath. which is dedicated to Bhairab. It is said that the Nyatapola was built to quell the nuisances of this Bhairab image. Its original construction as a single-storeyed building is attributed to Jagat Jyoti Malla, but in the early part of Bupatindra Malla's reign, it was extended to its present form and completed in 1708. The present structure, however, was only reassembled after the 1934 earthquake, using parts of the original fabric. The temple is rectangular with the main shrine at ground level. There are three tiers of roofs, the uppermost being gilded sheet metal surmounted with several ornate pinnacles. The supporting roof struts, of which there are fifty-six. depict the forms of the Matrika and Bhagmati goddesses. During the festival of Bisket, an image of Bhairab is taken around in a chariot and he is identified with the image of Kasi Biswanath. According to legend, Biswanath came one day to see the Bisket festival in the disguise of a human being. A tantric priest, recognizing him, wanted to capture him and started to bind him with mantras. Biswanath began to disappear but the priest, in despair, cut off his head, which is said to be enshrined in the temple.

The square, with its two main roads running diagonally across it, is of greater religious significance than that of the durbar square, as it is often used as a gathering place during the major festivals.

Taking the road in a westerly direction, it is worth looking at a very attractive group of traditional dwellings overlooking a small square located a short way along the road on the left-hand side. These houses belong to wealthy farmers and contain some very fine carved windows. The paved road and the excellent brickwork, which harmonizes well with the colour of the woodwork, help to make this a unique group of buildings. This road is, in fact, the head of the road that runs down to the river, and the one which the chariot has to negotiate during the Bisket festival. Ignoring the rather unpleasant open drains, it is worth walking down the street which, at the bottom, opens out again into another beautiful streetscape. It is here where the ground flattens out that the main part of the Bisket festival takes place when the image of Bhairab is removed from the chariot and placed in one of the small shrines and worshipped.

It is possible to cut through along one of the small paths to the right, at the point where the road opens out but, for the less intrepid, it is wiser to return to the main road leading out of Taumadhi and follow it to the left. This road is most likely the former main trading and pilgrimage route through Bhaktapur. Follow this road for about a hundred metres and then, by turning left, you should arrive in the district where most of the potters of Bhaktapur live. The road opens out into a square which is usually filled with potters working at their wheels. It is hard to find a way through the hundreds of pots of all shapes and sizes that are drying in the sun prior to their baking in the kilns behind the square. Obviously, this trade is dependent on the weather and is mostly carried out when the craftsmen have time to spare from their agricultural work.

Returning again to the Taumadhi Tol, you can either retrace your tracks to the durbar square and drive to Tachapal or, if walking, cross the square on the diagonal and follow along the road leading into the eastern sector of the town,

Taumadhi Tol to Tachapal

After turning slightly to the right, the route leads through an area crowded with shops. On the right, set into the line of shops, you will come across an impressive building which has recently undergone renovation as part of the Nepalese Government/Federal Republic of Germany Bhaktapur Development Project mentioned earlier. The building, known as the

Sukul Dhoka Math, was built by Ranajit Malla in about 1740 for a group known as the Sanyasis of Lakshmanapuri, and an endowment was set up by the king for daily worship to take place. The king placed a linga, Banalingeswari, in the shrine in 1744.

Here the wood-carvings are of exceptional quality, especially the windows on the first floor. The future of this building was only recently assured, as its condition before renovation was very dilapidated. During its repair the main façade was consolidated ; the former shop openings were filled in and the building was returned to its original form. The courtyard behind was gutted and rebuilt, and the renovated building will now be put to a more suitable use.

Continuing along the road, on the right is a small three-tiered temple, known as Golmadhi Ganesh, built in the mid-seventeenth century. Opposite there is a large and deep hitti, or tank, that has recently undergone repair. There are several interesting stone sculptures, some of them quite early, set in niches around the spout.

Beyond, the road widens and in the shops on the right dyers can be found hand-printing and dyeing the traditional local cloth. The road climbs a slight incline and from here on the work of the Bhaktapur Development Project will become evident. The streets have been repaved, the plinths of the houses reformed and storm-water and sewage drains have been introduced. This street eventually opens out onto the focal point of this project, the area known as Tachapal Tol. Here, all the important buildings have undergone restoration, water tanks have been cleaned out and repaired and a sewage system has been installed as well as a new drinking water supply.

Surrounding the square there are several maths, the most important being the Pujari Math, several small temples and shrines, and a fair number of important private dwellings. Dominating the square at the eastern end is the famous Dattatraya Temple, one of the most renowned temples not only of Bhaktapur but of the whole valley. It was originally built as a mandapa and its similarity to the Kasthamandapa in Katmandu is fairly evident. It is much smaller but none the less impressive. It only became known as Dattatraya Temple because the front part of the building was added later to house the images of Shiva Brahma and Dattatraya. A stone inscription states that a small shrine was built to commemorate the spot where a famous guru died. This shrine was later enlarged by Yaksha Malla in about 1427 as a chapara, a type of pilgrims' rest-house. During

the reign of Viswa Malla, the building was extended to form the temple as it stands today to serve as both a place of rest and an important shrine. The deities, as already stated, represent the three major Hindu deities or trinity. The entrance is protected again by the famous wrestlers of Bhaktapur, Jai Mal and Patta, who are flanked by the symbols of the deities within. Beyond, there is a fine image of Garuda set on a high pillar.

Just behind and slightly to the right is a building closely associated with the Dattatraya-the Pujari Math, one of the most celebrated maths to be found. In this square alone there are nine different maths. Since only thirty maths have been identified in the whole valley, the importance of this square can be fully realized.

The construction date of the Pujari Math is uncertain and steeped in legend. However, there are records stating that a math was built on this site during the reign of King Yaksha Prakash Malla (1428-82) ; it is recorded that the math was consecrated and opened for public puja during the year 1480. During Raja Vishwa Malla's reign, it is also recorded that intensive renovations were carried out to restore the building to its original form. Later, in 1763, further extensions and alterations were made by the *mahanta*, or chief priest, of the time. The math suffered considerable damage during the 1934 earthquake, and it was only with German aid that the building once again underwent major repair with a view to restoring it to its original condition. Today, it serves as the headquarters of the Bhaktapur Development Programme and is open to tourists. The exterior of the building belies the true brilliance of the carvings in the interior courtyard. Although rather imposing, the exterior has fairly standard styles of carving, except for some windows down a side alley which are carved in the form of a strutting peacock ; a symbol which today gives the monastery its more common name. However, the inner courtyard, which can only be seen if the building is opened for viewing, surpasses nearly all other examples of carving so far discussed, with the exception of that found in the Hanuman Dhoka Palace. The courtyard was probably the result of the eighteenth-century renovations and is worth close study. There is a profusion of detail in the windows, cornices and pillars, all of which are of highly complicated design. The brickwork is also unusual. It is much darker and the joints are sealed with a resinous mixture, known as *saldup*, a system apparently only used in Bhaktapur.

You will find a considerable amount of information available about the development programme, as there is a permanent

exhibition mounted in one of the rooms in the Pujari Math. Some of the upper rooms to the math are painted with interesting murals, an unusual feature in Nepalese buildings and, should they be accessible, they are well worth visiting.

Returning once again to the bottom end of the square, there is an interesting two-storey building dedicated to Bhimsen. The building was constructed in 1605 and contains an unusual earthen image of Bhimsen. The lower floor of the building is designed as a *pathi* with a small door looking out over the newly restored series of water conduits behind. Over the main shrine there is a gilded roof capped by several unusual pinnacles.

There is not space to identify the other nine maths ; however, it is worth taking a closer look at some of the façades to the buildings overlooking the square.

Returning to the top of the square and continuing along the narrow road beside the Dattatraya, you will pass several other recently renovated buildings. Towards the end of the road, on the right, there is a small but delightful temple complex. This temple, known as Wakupatinarayan, is dedicated to Garud Narayan and although probably of early construction, its exact date is not known. The small two-tiered temple, set in a neat stone-paved courtyard, is extensively covered or decorated with metal. The doorway is of embossed metal and the torana, the roof and the finials are all of gilded copper. Take a close look at the details on the roof: the small sun heads at the rib ends, the birds sitting on the corner pieces, and the highly ornate pinnacle with the inscribed metal ribbon falling down the roof from it. In front of the temple, there are several fine metal symbols and two beautiful garuds.

Wakupatinarayan is almost at the easternmost extreme of Bhaktapur. Continuing a short way beyond the complex, take a sharp left turn up a hill through a residential area. At almost the top of this road, you will arrive outside a simple building following almost the style and proportions of the dwellings you have just passed. This is in fact what is known as an Agan house, in which a god belonging to a particular sect is kept. This one is the dwelling of Navadurga and her associates, who are important for their roles in the religious lives of the people of Bhaktapur. A troupe of masked dancers, known as the Navadurga, performs ritual dances at all the major festivals in Bhaktapur throughout the year. The dancers, who come from a class known as Banamala, are highly venerated and greatly feared. The masks for this dance are kept on the first floor of this building, a dark, sinister place smelling of blood from the many sacrifices

associated with tantric rites performed to appease the goddess and her associates. The final dance at the end of July enacts the ritual death of Navadurga. During the dance, the masks are smashed and burnt. The goddesses are reborn once more during Dassain, with the creation and dedication of new masks which will survive the year. These masks are made in papier mâché by craftsmen.

The building itself is typical of the Agam house style. It is a long rectangular structure with two storeys and a single pitched roof. The windows and doors have ornately carved toranas and the supporting roof struts depict the Astramatrika.

At the end of the road, there is a large tank surrounded by further dwellings. Turning left alongside the tank, walk to the end of this open space and turn left again to follow a narrow alley that leads you back into the Tachapal Tol, passing a small temple known as Salan Ganesh, dedicated to the Ganesh that is strongly linked with the Taleju shrine in the palace.

The recently restored tank situated behind Salan Ganesh and the other repairing and restoration activities again demonstrate the importance of the well-organized Bhaktapur Development Programme, and it is hoped that it will act as an example for many other similar undertakings in the Katmandu Valley.

From Tachapal Tol, it is necessary to retrace your tracks back to the durbar square.

On your return by car, it is worth while stopping briefly to take a look at the Siddhipokhari, an enormous tank located close to the army headquarters in Bhaktapur. It is on built-up ground near the Tundikhel and measures nearly 100 metres long. The tank was constructed in the sixteenth century and legend has it that a serpent of untold size lives in the waters. For this reason, it is never emptied in case the serpent might escape. Even now the inhabitants of Bhaktapur will not dare enter the compound of the Siddhapokhari for fear of meeting this monster. Several additions have been made to the tank throughout its history, the most recent by King Mahendra in 1958.

If you have time to spare, it is worth returning to Katmandu along the old route passing through Thimi, a place that is famous for its pottery. On the road just outside of the town there is a small shop where the renowned papier mâché masks are made.

If you are in Nepal during the dry season, you will see the brickyards out in the fields along the roadside, where the Nepalese have been making their bricks for centuries. It is in these fields that the first of the new batch of the special glazed bricks were made and the regeneration of an old craft began.